



"See what kind of love the Father has given to us, that we should be called children of God; and so we are."

1 John 3:1

Dear Friends,

Thank you so much for your prayers and support – it has been an exciting and busy few months with many encouragements and highlights.

When I wrote my previous newsletter, Edwin (the CESA bishop whom I work for) and I were still based at Melville Union Church where I was mainly working with students. I have continued this work, and there have been many encouragements.

The main focus of the student work has been a midweek Bible study and the afternoon service. In the Bible studies we have been going through the book of Romans. I was at first concerned it may be a bit much for the students, but we have very much got into the swing of things. Each week the students are well engaged and ask excellent questions. The students have not just been keen to understand what the passage is saying, but have enthusiastically asked questions about how to live the truths out in day-to-day life on campus. The students are beginning a period of exams, then they are on holiday – so we may have a break from the Bible studies, but please do pray that when they start up again there might be continued fruit and encouragement from our studies.



Christ Church Hillbrow

In the evening services we have been preaching through 1 John – an encouraging book urging us to live as Christians seeking to walk in the light as we confess our sins and love one another. The preaching has been shared between Gerald (the interim minister at Melville Union Church), Leonard (the children's worker), Frederick (our apprentice), and myself. Frederick has been a huge encouragement in this respect – he has preached twice now, having never done so before. Both times his sermons have been excellent; he has engaged well with those he is speaking to, and combined this with faithful and clear exposition of the text. Give great thanks for him (as I do!) and pray that God would continue to work and use him in the future.

Despite still being involved in Melville Union on Easter Day, Edwin Ngubane – who I work for – was installed as the new minister of Christ Church Hillbrow, and I have moved to work alongside him. Our first two months have been a combination of challenges and many reasons to praise God. Hillbrow itself is a very challenging place; it is one of the most notorious areas in Johannesburg, known for crime, poverty, prostitution and many other social problems. The area used to be an affluent white area during the 70-80's, but with the end of apartheid and the global trend of movement out of the city centre, this heart of Johannesburg has been sorely neglected. However for all this time (almost 150 years), Christ Church Hillbrow has existed to be a light of the gospel in



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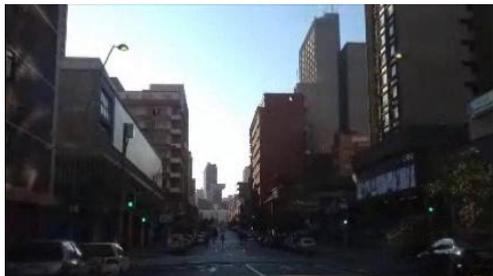
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June 2013

the area. We pray that today it would indeed be such. Many people at the church are struggling in many areas, not least financially. We have begun to preach through the gospel of Mark, presenting people with Jesus to encourage the Christians to rejoice in Christ and assure them of his work of salvation.



We have also begun midweek Bible studies, which I oversee, going through 1 John. It has been great to see people's heart for God's word and their desire to learn from it. Those who have come to the Bible studies have shown a real eagerness to learn and, again to put the Bible into practice. Praise God for that and pray that he might continue to work hunger for his word in his people. Pray again that I would be well equipped to teach God's word and know how to minister to people. This past Sunday we had our Annual General Meeting and

many people in the church were keen to get behind the work of the church, that the ministry might be reinvigorated. We are beginning a building fund to renovate the building (there is lots to do), and people seem positive about giving. Please pray for Edwin, the other leaders in the church, and myself as we seek to put in place plans for the future to take the church forward. Please pray for the congregation particularly, that there would be more men who could take up leadership positions within the church. I have also continued to help at Johannesburg Bible College, leading a preaching workshop. The students have worked hard this term, and generally produce good clear sermons. We have also had positive discussions on how to improve the sermons.

Zandspruit has continued, although due to struggling to get new students we have changed the format so that it is more of a Bible study through the Gospel of Mark. The change in format seems to work very well and we have received good feedback from the students. Pray for wisdom in going forward, on how best to serve the community in Zandspruit.



Unfortunately this week at my house we experienced the worse side of Johannesburg as our house was broken into. No one was in, but a few things were taken. It could have been a lot worse, so thank God that it was not – and pray for security in the future.

As you can see there is a lot going on, so please pray for continued faithfulness and clarity in teaching God's word over the next few weeks. It has been a real delight building partnerships with churches and individuals in the UK. We try to pray for you at our prayer meetings at Christ Church Hillbrow, so please do let me know how we can be praying.

Many thanks as always,
Ben

PRAYER POINTS

Praise:

- Hunger for God's word among students at Melville Union Church, and people at Christ Church Hillbrow.
- Positive support from the congregation at Christ Church Hillbrow for the plans to improve and build up the church.
- Frederick and his gifts, and the humility with which he uses them.

Pray:

- For Edwin and me, as we preach through Mark – that the congregation would be captivated by Jesus.
- As I prepare and lead Bible studies, that God would use them to equip his people to love Jesus and to love one another.
- For wisdom with regards to the future of the JBC work in Zandspruit, and how best to serve the community there.

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