



October 2014

Dear Friends,



Women's Fellowship Singing

Over the past month I have been preaching through the book of Ruth. As I reflect on the last few months the truth of Chapter 1 seemed to hit home. The whole book is about the sovereign rule of God but as Naomi returns to the land of Israel she says "the almighty has made my life very bitter." Although we may be uncomfortable with the truth Naomi states, it is truth nonetheless. God in his sovereignty brings hardship to his people and we can be honest about that. However, within that first chapter we begin to see that God does not only bring hardship but he also brings grace, "as the barley harvest begins". God's rule is sometimes hard but his grace is always present, as I preached.

The last few months have indeed been hard. As many of you will know during July I was back in the UK. It was a joy to be back with friends and family and to build partnerships with churches in the UK. However the time was overshadowed by the events back in Johannesburg. As I have said in previous prayer letters my boss, Edwin Ngubane, had been very ill for the first few months of this year. As I wrote my previous prayer letter he had seemed to be getting much better. However, very shortly after I sent out the letter, Edwin had a series of seizures at his home and was rushed back into hospital. His condition got worse and on the day I was flying back to the UK, I heard from his wife, that the doctors expected him to die. On the first Sunday that I was back in the UK I received the news that the Lord had taken his servant home. It was hard to be away at that time, however I am deeply thankful for brothers and sisters in the Lord who were a comfort and encouragement at that time.

The death of Edwin left my current posting in question. My original role was to assist Edwin in his role as bishop and pastor of Christ Church Hillbrow. While Edwin was ill I filled in pastoring Christ Church Hillbrow but with his death the future was somewhat uncertain. While I was in England I heard that Christ Church Hillbrow were very keen that I come back to serve at Christ Church. When I returned in July I continued to pastor the church, and have been asked by the



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council to continue as the minister in charge of Christ Church Hillbrow. Although I had been doing much of that work over the last few months, it is good to have the future clearer but also I am daunted by the responsibility.

As I continue to pastor at Christ Church Hillbrow I covet your prayers. To run a church in central Johannesburg is not something that I had planned, in many ways I continue to feel very weak and not up to the job. But I am a jar of clay in which there is great treasure, the gospel. Pray that in my weakness, his gospel might shine through. Pray that with all the difficulties and stresses of overseeing the church I would keep focused on the most important role of the pastor and that is feeding his sheep. Pray that I would guard time to prepare and to teach God's word and that the church would be changed, not through my ideas, but through the word of God.

I am very thankful for the support which there is to help me in this role. There is a supportive council, and excellent staff and men in the congregation are beginning to step up to leadership. Prayer as we start to implement plans to help the church run more smoothly and get more people involved in the ministry of the church at every level. Please pray that we would be a congregation who loves Christ and one another.

Personally I have been made aware of the great need to be well supported while I am in South Africa. Please do pray that the Lord would provide a good support structure, places and people whom I can see to get away and have some distance from a fairly intense work. I am particularly thankful for two Crosslinks families (Glenn and Lizzie Nesbitt, and James and Lucy Buchannan) who have been and continue to be an immense support and encouragement. Pray particularly that close friendships would develop and this would help me in my ministry.

In terms of practicality, the Lord has provided a wonderful flat for me to rent which is in walking distance from the church. This has taken away a lot of the anxiety which used to go with traveling to and from the church, which is wonderful news. It is very safe and although it is very close to the church it very much feels that I am away from it all. It is also easier to have people round and make use of the place for ministry purposes for which I am very grateful.

As always thank you for all you prayer.

Ben Williamson



View from my new flat.

PRAYER POINTS

Praise:

- Many in the congregation being keen to serve.
- Good response from the congregation to my preaching.
- Clarity with regards to the future of Christ Church Hillbrow.

Pray:

- To be able to concentrate on teaching God's word and pastoring God's people.
- To build a good support structure to aid me in my ministry.
- For wisdom in overseeing the work at CCH.

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