



***"...so is my word that goes out from my mouth:  
It will not return to me empty,  
but will accomplish what I desire  
and achieve the purpose for which I sent it." Isaiah 55:11***

Dear Friends,

I write to you from a hot but encouraging Johannesburg! It has been a few months of a few challenges but nonetheless much to praise God for.



As many of you may know in the middle of August I fractured my foot which then had to be operated on. I am happy to report that my first major experience of South African health care was indeed a good one. Despite some confusion sorting out the insurance all went smoothly in the end. The operation went well and I have been hobbling around on crutches for the past few weeks. The cast is due to come off shortly and hopefully things will return to normal. Thankfully the whole injury did not affect me too much so apart from being slightly slower at getting round and preaching sitting down I was able to continue to as normal.

God has indeed been at work. As I thought over the last three months and prepared to write I wondered whether any spectacular had happened and apart from my foot and I thought not. But then I reflected that although nothing spectacular has happened, God's goodness has been obvious continually through the ordinary. Many people, not least myself, have attested to being helped by my sermons, which is surely a work of God's grace! The Bible

studies have been a great encouragement also. At Christ Church we finished our study through the book of 1 John and it was such a joy to see people assured by God's word declared in that book. The eagerness which people wanted to practically apply God's word to their situation challenged me. Having finished 1 John, we are now reading through Vaughan Robert's book "Distinctives" which is wonderfully practical and as we study the passages which are expounded in the book. We discuss how we can be distinctive from the world around us, in a place like Hillbrow where much of the brokenness of the world is seen this is a great thing to consider. Please pray for us we go through the book for distinct a radical change in our lives as we seek to live out humble obedience to God's word.

At both Christ Church Hillbrow and Melville Union, where I still help out at the evening service, we have begun to preach through the book of Exodus. Although in many ways the story has been familiar it has been a terrific reminder of God's care and goodness. As I have worked through the



**Ben Williamson**

42 Scully Street

Roosevelt Park

JOHANNESBURG 2195

South Africa

[williamson@crosslinks.org](mailto:williamson@crosslinks.org)

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book I have been reminded how so often although situations seem desperate and difficult (for example the killing of all the Israelite babies in Egypt) the book of Exodus always encourages us to look to the bigger picture, where although we may not be able to see it, God is working to bring salvation to his people. What encouragement that God is at work and one I often need to remind myself of when I cannot necessarily see how he has been at work.

At Christ Church we have started to plan for 2014! It is all very exciting and things are coming into shape. However planning is one thing and things actually happening is quite another! Please pray for us as we plan, that we would seek to be diligent in our plans and to seek to serve the church as best we can. Pray that what is planned would come to pass and that by God's goodness we might be an effective witness to Christ in Hillbrow. In particular pray for the youth, young adults and small groups, all of which I oversee. They all need some reviving so pray that 2014 in those areas would be a real area of growth and joy. Pray also for the remainder of this year with the Christmas period and the opportunity to reach more people with the gospel.

With the students at Melville Union we have continued through the book of Romans. As we did Roman's 9-11 all in one evening the student's eyes lit up as they saw the glories of God's grace. As we moved into chapter 12, we looked at how we are to live lives of living sacrifices in view of all that God has done for us. Again as we go through this section of the book please pray that we might be shaped, not by duty, but by the mercy we have seen in the gospel and so live lives accordingly.



At Zandspruit (above) we have been continuing through Mark's gospel but this week was a special week, we celebrated the work of Philen Naidu who started Zandspruit Bible School as he handed over the leadership to me and to members of the community. We were delighted to welcome back familiar faces who have been part of the school during the past few years. As people gave testimonies of what has happened since the beginning of the school I was moved by the affection that people in the community expressed not only to Philen but also for me! I am always struck the way God seems to use me even though in many ways I am so ill-suited for all sorts of things. Zandspruit Bible School is a testimony to God's grace and we pray that it would continue.

On a personal level please continue to pray for good rest and growing friendships with people here in Johannesburg. I praise God for his goodness his provision so far. Please pray that it would continue and I would have effective rest.

Thank you as ways for prayers and partnership in Christ, Ben

#### PRAYER POINTS

##### Praise:

- Growth as people have heard the word of God preached.
- Straight forward surgery and recovery from injury.
- Hunger in various Bible studies.

##### Pray

- Plans for 2014.
- Continual fruit from the preaching of God's word.
- Growing friendship and support in South Africa.

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Crosslinks, 251 Lewisham Way, London SE4 1XF Tel: 020 8691 6111 [pletters@crosslinks.org](mailto:pletters@crosslinks.org)  
Crosslinks, 32 Montgomery Road, Belfast BT6 9HL Northern Ireland Tel: +44 (0) 28 9079 6028  
Crosslinks 28, Bachelor's Walk, Dublin 1, Republic of Ireland. Tel: 00 353 (1) 8729508