



NEWS (FROM BLOEMFONTEIN)
FROM THE RAVENS,
NOVEMBER 2011

*"Who is like the Lord our God, Who dwells on high, Who humbles Himself to behold
The things that are in the heavens and in the earth?" (Ps 113:5-6)*

Once again there has been a prolonged silence from our end. The Lord has sustained us by His grace and much has happened since our previous newsletter in April.

The most significant news is that we have moved to Bloemfontein the middle of October. This has providentially happened a bit earlier than we anticipated through my employer who offered me a transfer to the local office here in the city. We are currently staying with my Mom and will Lord willing be moving into a place of our own on the 10th of December. We are grateful to the Lord for this provision. We will be using the house for all the meetings of the church plant until such a time that it is necessary to rent a bigger meeting place. This also means that we would be more than happy to host you in our new home ... you just need to come to Bloem ...

We have started with a Bible study series on Wednesday evenings where we are working through the fundamentals of the Christian faith. We hope to use this series to help those interested to lay a good foundation in the fundamental doctrines and bring across something of the philosophy of ministry we have in mind for the church plant. So far we have had between five and seven people in attendance. We also hope that this Bible study will become a feeder to establish a core group.

Additionally, we have started with a study in the book of Romans on Sunday evenings. So far it is Mom, Liza and myself attending. We have also commenced with a weekly prayer meeting on Sunday afternoons.

We are grateful to the Lord for a young couple in Emmanuel Baptist Church (EBC, our sending church in Johannesburg) who have committed themselves to move down to Bloemfontein mid-January 2012 to help with the church plant. Please pray for Adam and Nickey as they make arrangements to move down.

Please also pray for a family/friends here in Bloemfontein who are going through a trying time, that Lord would graciously undertake for them. They have two children and were expecting twins. A number of weeks ago the doctor advised of complications in the pregnancy which required a specialized and risky operation in order to try to preserve the babies' lives. The operation was carried out and about two weeks later the one twin died. A further two weeks later they learned that the surviving twin has an enlarged liver and hydrocephaly.

We thank the Lord for opportunities to minister and meet new people. Two of these, an elderly lady and an elderly man, have since passed away with cancer. I had the opportunity to direct them to God and share the Gospel with them.

We hope to start with Sunday morning services in our home towards the end of January, so we will value your prayers for the preparation.

In our previous newsletter I mentioned that we used this past year to plan and prepare for the church plant. We made a number of trips to Bloemfontein, often accompanied by folk from EBC, to investigate the local context, especially the spiritual state of people in the city. We have put together a video that captures something of that and you can access it by following the following link: <http://dl.dropbox.com/u/32057140/Bloem%20video.f4v>

Elizabeth completed grade 1 this year but had to get through the last month by way of home schooling due to the move to Bloemfontein. The children will have an extended holiday this summer! Elizabeth will be going a girls school, known as Eunice where my Mom taught for many years, next year and Joshua to a pre-school called Eduplus. They are very excited about this prospect. Little big Al is a tonic and very vocal, he might become an opera singer or a preacher judging by the output of his voice. He also started walking a couple of weeks ago, which causes a lot of excitement to all.



We have covered a lot of ground with the Biblical Counselling course and will finishing off in June next year. I have a lot catching up to do with all the assignments. We are also working on a website for the church plant, which will hopefully be ready towards the end of December. We are pleased to let you know that we as the elders at EBC have decided on a name for the church plant, **Hope Bible Church**.

Please continue to pray with us.

In Christ

Richard, Liza, Elizabeth, Joshua and Alan Raven

Note to all: If you have the time and opportunity, please do let us know how you are doing. We would love to hear from you!