



## M A R C H   N E W S   N o v e m b e r   2 0 1 4

Dear Friends and Family,

### **God's invitation has been received!**

It has only been a short time since our last prayer letter, but we wanted to share our delight at God's response to the prayers you and we have been praying over the past 2 years.

On Tuesday 28th October Stephen was interviewed at the Anglican church of St James the Great, Birstall, Leicester. The process of meeting some of the church people was very positive and encouraging for us. We felt God's presence immediately we arrived at the church and everyone was SO welcoming! We discovered that they have been praying for 8 years about this new mission venture and are really excited that the funding has finally been approved for the project to begin. We were excited for them! It is brilliant that they have chosen to invest their resources in mission and in seeking to reach out to a large new-build

housing estate, which is under construction on the edge of their village.

During the interview we tried to be as transparent as possible about ourselves and it was encouraging to sense that everyone was really focussed not on 'recruitment' but on seeking God's will for this project; which was great, because that was exactly our focus too.

Anyway, the result was they contacted us two days later to say that they believe God is calling us to go and work with them! And we really feel this too! So come mid-



February we are off to Leicester to take up the post of Community Pioneer Worker on the Hallam Fields estate in the village of Birstall, where some 1000 new homes are being built, this post is a 3 year contract.

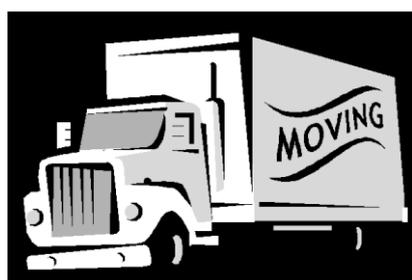
To be invited to take up this role is both humbling and daunting. But then, if it wasn't scary it wouldn't be God would it?! We are, however, convinced that this is God's calling for our immediate future.

Practically, this is going to be a challenging time for us, which is why we wanted to ask for specific prayer.

We would ask you to pray for protection and for strength to do all that will need to be done. We will be sad to leave Villy en Auxois and our many friends both here and in the parish. When we left the UK we left parents, family, and friends, now we are going to have to leave two of our boys here in France - but we believe that we are doing what God is asking of us and we can only pray that our obedience will bring blessing. Thankfully visits should be easy, since both East Midlands and Birmingham airports are within 45 minutes' drive of Leicester.

Many of you have faithfully supported us for a long time. We hope that we have consistently expressed how grateful we are to you for your prayers and your sacrificial giving, without which our work here would have been impossible.

This new job is a paid position for Stephen, (equivalent to a young teacher's salary) and we imagine that Sharon will need to find some part-time work once we get to Birstall. All of which is to say we invite you to prayerfully seek God about whether or not you continue to financially support our ministry come March 2015. We would appreciate if you could let us know beforehand of any changes. We do however earnestly ask that you continue to pray for us!



In considering moving back to the UK we quickly realised that most of our furniture and belongings are old and past their best, and that it would not be economically sensible to spend good money on taking them with us. We will sell, donate or dispose of most of our stuff and move with a part-load, which will be cheaper.

So we will arrive in the UK with mostly books, clothes, personal items - and guitars of course!! Please pray that we would be able to find a good removal company and set up the best schedule for us. We expect to take our French car because we don't want to be without transport, but as you can imagine it is not ideal, and we will need to pray about a replacement.

As you can imagine, the expense of moving and setting up a new home are rather terrifying! We also imagine that living costs in the UK will be significantly higher than they are for us here at present. So if you feel God's prompting to help us in any way please contact us!! If you would like to contribute with a 'one-off' gift, our friend Rachel Cook has agreed to handle these. Cheques payable to "Mrs R Cook" can be sent to her at 55 Footners Lane, Burton, Christchurch BH23 7NR, or one-off gifts for us can be made through the good people of the Scriptural Knowledge Institute (Please contact Alan Jessop on 0117 924 4918, for details).

Please stand in prayer with us over the coming months and help us to 'finish well' here. We are praying that we might still bear fruit in these last few months in France and be a blessing to those around us. The French translation of Stephen's Jonah book still needs to be finalised. The English version is now selling (albeit slowly!), note that a hardback copy of "Jonah the epistle of wild grace" would make an IDEAL Christmas present (available from all online retailers)!

More seriously, we realise that all of our activities here from now on will be tinged with a little sadness, but we are also very excited to see what God has in store for us in the future.

Pray also for the people of the parish of St James the Great and for the unsuspecting residents of Hallam Fields Estate! May we arrive to find that God is already at work there! Please also pray for the vicar, the Rev Vince Jupp.

Again, thank you for your prayers which have released God's invitation for our future.

May God bless you over the coming months, love,

*Stephen, Sharon, Benjamin, Joshua and Caleb*