



Roger Collins <clerk@mvalley.org>

Annual Update and updated contact info

1 message

Joshua Rieger <joshandgina@gmail.com>

Tue, Jun 3, 2014 at 9:55 AM

To: Roger Collins <clerk@mvalley.org>

Roger,

Thanks so much for sending out the email about Andrew. I'd talked to Perry last night and this morning and having been through many of these same tests last year I know how hard this can be.

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Annual Report

Fathers and Brothers,

I appreciate, so much, your ongoing prayers both for my family and our ministry in Northern England. As most of you know, just as we were preparing to leave a year ago, I was confronted by illness which postponed our departure. I had low platelet counts and initially they didn't know if I had leukaemia, or if it was something else. Thankfully, after 6 months of recovery and expensive treatments, the Lord brought us to a time that we were able to leave with relatively few health concerns.

My family and I spent the month of January in Brussels, Belgium, with the four of us living in a small dormitory room for one last month of MTW training. With that completed we moved to the United Kingdom at the beginning of February. Much of the minutiae, like getting a mobile phone, a bank account or a place to live takes much longer than it otherwise would when you have no credit in the country. To this point I still don't have a mobile phone contract, but instead am using my old phone with a SIM card in it that I top up monthly. Maybe after I've been here 7-8 months I might have the credit to get a contract. We'll see. This has helped to teach us patience, as we often want to get things done much faster than we are able to do.

We came to England because, through MTW, I was called by 2 churches in the Evangelical Presbyterian Church of England and Wales (EPCEW) to plant a church in Northern England. One of those churches, a new church plant itself, planted by an MTW missionary, had started a monthly Bible study in the area we were going to be working in several months before we arrived. There was a small but growing group of people from the area who had been attending the study. As we arrived I took over the study. We've moved the study from monthly to fortnightly. At this point there are 11-14 from the area attending the study. Lord willing, we hope to move to weekly meetings, soon, as we begin moving towards Sunday meetings.

There have been several answers to prayer already. First, the number of people from the local area who are involved in the study has continued to rise. We have had great encouragement and support from the churches that are sending us out, despite the fact that they are 40 minutes and 1:10 away. A few of them, especially the elders come consistently to provide encouragement and to show the new folks the connection that they have with other churches. Second, many of the people who are coming have no real history with presbyterianism or even an understanding of reformed Christianity. Some of them have a fledgling faith that has not been fed by sound teaching and we question whether some have yet made a credible profession of faith. We are having a real opportunity to have a range of discipleship that goes from encouraging people already committed to the historic reformed faith to helping people who want to be a part of a Presbyterian church plant to understand what presbyterianism is to encouraging potentially fledgling believers to give up addictions like alcohol. Third, there have been many provisions like a house, a vehicle and numerous other little things.

There are a few areas where we would appreciate your continued prayer. First, my wife and I are expecting our third child. Please pray for this process. One of our new experiences is learning how to work with NHS. So far, we have had wonderful experiences with them, but it's still a very new things. Think of how complex it would be to learn a new medical system that is new from the ground up. Second, although my health is good enough to move here and live here, my doctors seem to think that I will probably deal with blood issues on and off for the rest of my life, although they're not sure. So far, I have been fine, but there is some anxiety to that end from time to time. Pray for my health, but also that we will lean not on our own understanding. Third, pray for the beginnings of Hexham Presbyterian Church. There is almost no evangelical witness within a 40 minute drive of where we are planting the church. What is there is very weak and the sheep are not being fed. There are some in the area with a faint desire for an evangelical work, but they have not had access to it for at least a decade and probably more. Pray for the Tyne valley and for the people in need of the Gospel here. Pray that God would give us boldness and bring us together with the people God is calling to himself.

Thank you again for your encouragement and accountability. I count it a great blessing to have the protection and wisdom of a presbytery both here in England and Mississippi, knowing I am not a lone crusader. My mobile number (+44 7930 016785) is an iPhone, so anyone with an iPhone or iPad should be able to message me for free. We long to keep in touch with you.

Your servant in Christ,
Joshua Rieger