

# Phillip and Vivienne Hatton

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## Prayer Letter April 2009

*Dear friends*

After such a long silence we'd like to update you on just some of the things that have been happening in the church in the last few months.

### Sunday School and youth group

For many years we have been asking for volunteers to help Jeanne and Vivienne with Sunday school. Our pleas seemed to fall on deaf ears – but then last autumn we announced a training programme for Sunday school teachers to be run by the Ligue (Scripture Union) and, to our delight, three ladies volunteered. The three, with Vivienne and Jeanne have now attended two of the planned ten training days, which are spread over two years. Myriam (from Colombia), Linda (from Haiti) and Victorine (from Congo) are already beginning to help out in the group for five to 11 year olds which is led by Jeanne. Her hope is to divide the group by age to make the teaching more appropriate to each. At the same time, Jocelyne, a 16 year-old Congolese girl has also been following a training course and, alongside another girl of the same age, has begun to teach a group for the two and a half to four year olds. At the moment there are four little boys and, if the first lesson is anything to go by, they'll be having a whale of a time! There are a couple of babies on the way too!



Vivienne continues to teach the 12-16 year old group, with around eight regulars. The youth group is now led by Christian, Paul and Jeanne's eldest son. Five of them took part in the Belgian Baptist youth camp over New Year. A number of them also plan to attend the Baptist Union of Belgium (UBB) summer youth camp too. During the Easter holidays, some of them will be taking part in an evangelism



project with other churches, led by a team from Agape France. We'll be holding our holiday club from 6-10 July, in the local park and looking forward to receiving helpers from our home church and beyond. We have also been asked to host a youth day for the UBB at the end of September.

### Family services

After several years of leading the monthly family services ourselves, there was a request from a number of people in the church to change the format a little. They wanted a 'proper' sermon – more 'meat'! Various suggestions were made and we now have more people taking part. Typically someone will lead the service, the young people choose the songs and lead them, the six to 11s sing or present something they've been learning about, Phil or Paul preaches, someone else leads the prayers and if anyone wishes to sing a solo or in a group, they are able to do so. They've gone really well so far, with a great atmosphere and lively worship.

### Ladies' group

The ladies meet once a month on a Saturday morning. Numbers vary tremendously as quite a number of them work shifts. However, back in November, everyone made a great effort to change their schedules in order to attend our first ladies' weekend at the church. Rosalie Kimbangi, a former Congo colleague, came to speak on 'walking by

the Spirit' and led us in studying the pillars of wisdom described in Proverbs. As well as good teaching and discussion, we also made biscuits and smoothies as well as greetings cards. Seventeen ladies stayed for the whole weekend and other joined us for the day on the Saturday. The group prepared and led the whole service on the Sunday. The overwhelming response was, "When can we have the next one?"

### Prayer

Over the last few months, Paul and Phillip have been teaching quite often on prayer. There's a regular prayer meeting on Wednesdays and about every three months we hold a half night of prayer. In March, Phillip was led to suggest a communion service with prayers for healing and anointing for those who wished. It was a fantastic evening. There was a real sense of God's presence and the power of the Holy Spirit at work. We'd like to see more similar occasions in the future. Another topic for our prayers has concerned our building. We're so pleased to have it, with all the space it provides. For a number of months now, the pastors have been seeking to help the members face up to the longer term financial responsibilities and much prayer has gone in to the best way of doing that. A recent church meeting appointed a finance committee who in turn presented a plan to the church and people are now beginning to be more realistic about giving – even though this has come at a difficult moment in the general economy.

### The food bank

The Brussels' Food Bank is a charitable organisation which receives food from various sources and passes it on to different groups to redistribute. We had long been aware of its existence but some years ago, when we enquired, we were told there were others in the vicinity and so it wouldn't be possible. Two things came about which changed that. First of all we moved to our 'new' building. Then, David and Jennifer, an American couple came along. They'd been involved in a food bank depot in another place, where they also ran a drop-in centre. For a number of reasons, that needed to close and so they offered to bring the food bank to us. With the current economic crisis, there are a lot of needy people in Brussels. It's not a side of life here that is often seen on British TV. We began as a distribution centre in January, having distributed leaflets about it in the neighbourhood. Once a month the food is collected from the charity's depot and we bag it up according to the number of people in the families who are registered. We are entitled to receive it for thirty families, varying in composition from one to seven people. Some

of our congregation are on the list but just over half the families are from outside the church. The people who have come along so far are from a number of different countries – Angola, Brazil, Congo, Cuba, Haiti, Romania and Rwanda, as well as Belgians. They have to come a couple of weeks before the distribution day each time, to bring their bag back and to collect a card with their details on. We don't ask any questions about their status or financial position; it's all done on trust. This time gives us an opportunity to chat and get to know them better too. On distribution days we offer a drink and biscuits too, to help people to feel at ease and to know that they can stay around and talk. One lady has asked for a French Bible and another for one in Swahili. At the distribution at the end of March, we also gave out little bags of Easter eggs and an invitation to join us for the service and a meal on Easter day.

Our hope is that from this beginning, we'll be able to invite these people and others from the area to other social events and activities. David and Jennifer are available to help us set up a centre, the form of which we're talking and praying about at present. Possibly to have computers available to help people with job searches and writing their CVs; possibly a children's club; possibly... Please pray with us.

*Thank you all for  
your continued  
support and prayers*

*Phillip and Vivienne*



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