

McClure Mumblings

Steve & Debs serving with The Navigators in Southampton and beyond...



Mar 2011



Above Left: Benjamin, Middle: All the family & Right: Naomi

God is our refuge and strength...

"As for God, his way is perfect: The LORD's word is flawless; he shields all who take refuge in him. For who is God besides the LORD? And who is the Rock except our God? It is God who arms me with strength and keeps my way secure. He makes my feet like the feet of a deer; he causes me to stand on the heights." 2 Samuel 22:31-34

The past term has felt like something of a blur for us; at times it has been manic, at times it has been quite challenging and it has felt very chaotic throughout! It all started at New Year with a round of Swine Flu for the whole family and continued with the arrival of a team of builders to extend the back of our house here in Southampton. Ministry has also been challenging with Steve especially travelling a lot this term (Birmingham, Finchampstead, Riga, Strasbourg); he would also have been at the NAVS Big Weekend in the Peak District had it not been for a rather nasty tummy bug which also went round the family! With the building work going on in our home (which is nearly finished), the busyness of a new semester, helping at CU Events week and the various trips away we are really feeling like we need a rest. It has been a very draining term and all of us as a family have felt the effects. As ever it has been both a highlight and a privilege to walk alongside some of the people involved with us here in Southampton. More to follow on the next page about the individual ministries we are involved in but suffice to say that despite the challenges God has been faithful to us and to the out-workings of His ministry here in Southampton.

There has also been much activity on the Latvia front with some key meetings at our home in January with Ole-Magnus (Navigators Director for the Baltics) and Bernie Dodd (Navigators European Director) and then also in Riga with Ole-Magnus again and also Derek Leaf (UK NAVS). The agenda for these meetings was our ongoing involvement in Latvia not just through summer trips but also the wider ministry we have enjoyed over these past 5-6 years. The ministry context in Riga, Latvia has changed significantly during this time and we have been left considering what role God would have us play going forward. This has been a challenging process during which at one stage it seemed as if God was closing the door on our future involvement in Latvia. Throughout this process God has been our Rock, our refuge and our strength; we are praying for a new sense of partnership and team work amongst those ministering in this country and are glad to continue to play a role in what God is doing in Latvia. The exact details are still unclear but Steve will definitely be leading the international team again this summer (with UK, US, Norwegian and Latvian students). We will also look to continue to play a support role with the people we know in Latvia and also with Patrick Noonan as he moves to Latvia on a 3 year assignment at the end of the summer. This has been draining for us both but especially for Debs; we have taken the decision that for the time being she will take a step back from her role in Latvia. Do give thanks to God for what He has been doing among us over this past year.

The Navigators, Turner House, 54 The Avenue, Southampton, SO17 1XQ
Tel: 02380-558800, Website: www.navigators.co.uk / www.sotonnavs.org

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Our Address: 53 Harefield Road, Hampton Park, Southampton, Hants, SO17 3TG
Tel: 023-80677557, E-mail: steveanddebs@the-mcclures.co.uk, Web: www.the-mcclures.co.uk

Opportunities to minister...

Training leaders (Connect, Graduate Team, CU Leaders) – The major focus of our time here in Southampton is towards Leadership training and in particular helping and walking with our full-time staff (Adam & Stephen who are on the Connect programme) and Tim Peters (Trainee Rep). It has been a pleasure and a privilege working alongside these guys in the ministry this past 6 months. It has been exciting to see them grow and develop; their heart for people and desire to draw alongside them has been very inspiring to us. Steve meets with this full-time team once a week to work through the Connect study material together and to chat and pray about the ministry. Please pray especially for Stephen and Adam as they consider where and what God is leading to after the Connect year.

We also have a new **Central Leadership team** of five (Steve, Tim Peters, Jane Mitchell, James Pritchard & Kate Marshall) which was born out of our wider leadership (which also includes Debs, Lowri Peters, Steve & Holly Price, Chris Hinde, Lydia Clarke & Kim Gordon). The rationale is that though the wider leadership team served its purpose, a smaller group meeting every other week was needed to take a greater handle of the daily running of the ministry. It has been thrilling to see a really positive response to this new team and we have had a couple of helpful meetings talking and praying about what it means for us to be team.

Finally Steve also leads a group of **CU small group leaders** in a weekly Bible study in preparation for leading their CU Hall Groups. We have long had excellent links with the CU at Southampton University and it continues to be a blessing to serve in this way. We also recently had the new CU committee for dinner and had a helpful time talking about ways we can serve and help one another. Please give thanks for the fantastic sense of unity that God has blessed the different Christian groups with here in Southampton and continue to pray for these relationships.

Student ministry in Southampton – We continue to run three weekly ministry nights; the Monday IGNITE group (discussion based context suitable for all), the Tuesday evening Bible study group (which has been growing in recent weeks) and the Thursday evening Bible study group (which has continued to be well attended this term despite the chaos going in our house). In addition we also have a weekly Prayer Breakfast, weekly NAVS footy at the Park and also a couple of Sunday lunches a term. All of these events and opportunities serve as contexts for us to get alongside and help students; we pray that out of these times will come strong, intentional and helpful relationships in which people can talk about their relationship with God and grow in the faith.

Mission (Norway & Latvia) – As many of you know mission remains close to our hearts and we are so grateful to have the opportunities to take students and recent graduates away on short term mission trips. This term we have already had trips to **Riga, Latvia** (for the February, Latvia Student Weekend), to **Strasbourg, France** (to visit Gez & Alison Perry who used to lead the ministry here) and a team is shortly heading off to visit **Bergen, Norway** as well. We have already talked a little about the summer trip to Norway & Latvia (and we include some more information on the trip with this letter) but there are also people from the ministry going to Ethiopia (Stephen MH & Dave Callaghan) and to Poland (Tim P) on NAVS summer mission trips this summer. What a privilege to be involved in what God is doing around the world. Over the past five summers we have appreciated firsthand just how valuable it is to walk with people 24:7 in the context of these trips; we face the good, the bad and the ugly together and God has blessed us all richly. Please pray for all who are going on trips this year.

Graduates (Southampton LIFENET) – Lydia Clarke and Dave Watkins (whose wife Catrin recently had a baby boy, Matthew) lead the Southampton LIFENET group which meets once every couple of months. LIFENET is for people post student world to chat about real life issues such as money, work, priorities and focusing on God. The group is still at an early stage but we are encouraged by good reports so far of how this is serving people post University. Please pray for Dave and Lydia as they give leadership to this much needed ministry.



Spring/Summer Planner

Sat 2-Sun 3 Apr – Steve at FFM (Birmingham)

Fri 15 Apr – Donald & Becki's wedding (Above Bar Church)

Sat 16-Sat 30 Apr – Family Holiday in the Lakes

Fri 6 – Sun 8 May – 3 Peaks Challenge (N&L Fund-Raiser)

Sun 15 May – Walk the Wight

Sun 22 May – Naomi's dedication (Above Bar Church)

Fri 3 Jun – SOTON NAVS End of Year BBQ

Sat 4 Jun – South East NAVS day (Finchampstead)

Sat 11-Sun 12 Jun – Steve at FFM (Glasgow)

Tues 14 Jun – Sat 16 Jul – Mission trip to Norway & Latvia

Late July / August – Annual break from Student ministry



Family Prayers

Amongst all these ministry activities and needs please do pray for us as a family;

- that God would be at the centre of all we do
- that we'd enjoy ministering together as a family
- that the family would both be blessed and be a blessing to the group
- that we would find a helpful balance between work, ministry and family life
- that in time Benjamin and Naomi would come to know Jesus Christ for themselves

