



Fruitfulness and following Jesus...

⁵ 'I am the vine; you are the branches. If you remain in me and I in you, you will bear much fruit; apart from me you can do nothing...⁸ This is to my Father's glory, that you bear much fruit, showing yourselves to be my disciples. **John 15:5 & 8**

As we continue to enjoy a period of great stability in both the family and our ministry we still continue to reflect on the difficult things that we have been working through over the past few years. One repeated lesson that Jesus has been teaching us has been in the area of fruitfulness. Jesus says "every branch that does bear fruit he prunes so that it will be even more fruitful" (John 15:2). Despite the challenges it has been a hugely fruitful time. It seems from what Jesus says here that God uses periods of 'pruning' to make us even more fruitful. We've been starting to see this working out in a number of different ways: Firstly God has given us five fantastic children and it is an absolute thrill to see them growing and developing. As you would expect there is never a dull moment in our house. We are praying for fruitfulness in them and that one day they too will come know Jesus for themselves. They are also a key part of our ministry as we work together to welcome students and friends to our home. As you know this time last year the challenges of such fruitfulness on our home felt considerable. Yet a year on and we have been enjoying the benefits of our loft conversion (completed November); indeed it is hard to remember what it was like without it!

Secondly we are starting to see fruitfulness in how our experiences over the past few years have enhanced our ministry with others. There are of course questions about the shape of our future contribution but there is much clarity about the nature of the ministry God is calling us to. In particular God has sharpened our desire to invest in generations of labourers, namely raising up disciples who make disciples. For the time being the context is primarily students but we also give quite a bit our time to the work in Europe and to International Missions more generally. Ten years ago we wondered whether God might be calling us to Latvia but it later became clear that was not God's plan. Instead God was sending others, namely Adam & Kate Collett (who were part of the student ministry for years) and we're excited to report that they have just moved to Latvia. We have also enjoyed involvement with fellow labourers now working in Portugal & France and we ourselves are seeking to make an increasing contribution to the work in Norway. It is a privilege to marry our heart for the nations with our work among students both here and abroad. Please do pray for us as we "Ask the Lord of the harvest, therefore, to send out workers into his harvest field" (Matthew 9:38). In all the different things we are doing we long to equip more to step out in faith.

Looking to the new Semester...



Highlights from the work and prayer points:

- **The Student Ministry:** Give thanks for a good 1st term during which we talked about what it means to live 'missional lives'. The weekend away (combined with Bournemouth students) was a particular highlight. This term we are talking about Becoming Whole Life Disciples as we seek to grow an outward looking and holistic approach to following Jesus. Please pray for deepening of relationships amongst the group and a growing desire to live out our faith amongst the lost.
- **Growing with the Guys:** Steve is part of a Guys Bible study group which has studied Colossians and is now beginning Deuteronomy 1-10. Please pray that this group would be a vehicle for much growth in each other's lives. Time with these people is a huge privilege.
- **Events Week:** Two weeks ago Steve was helping out at the CU's events week, "More". It was an excellent opportunity to meet students and talk with them about the gospel. Please pray for Steve (and team) as we seek to meet more students over the coming months.
- **Key Dates:** You will notice that we have quite a busy term ahead with Steve away quite a bit. Please pray for fruitful times at these various meetings/conferences and for the family back home.
- **Future Contribution:** There is an ongoing need to get out and meet new students; please pray for Steve and the team as we seek to do that. Please also pray for networking opportunities as we also seek to grapple with what ongoing contribution the ministry might continue to play amidst the ever changing student scene here in Southampton.
- **International Missions:** Do remember Adam & Kate as they settle into life in Riga and for the Summer Programmes we are looking to run in the summer (esp. Norway, Poland, Ukraine & Hungary/Slovenia). Ask God to provide the right people to make these trips a blessing.
- **Norway/Europe:** Steve was in Bergen for a few days in January & is in the process of planning a trip again this summer. Please pray for clarity & wisdom about how we continue to be a blessing further afield.

To God be the Glory,

Steve, Debs, Benjamin, Naomi, Samuel, Jacob & Aaron

Spring – Key Dates

Fri 24-Sun 26 Feb: The 'Big Weekend' in Blackpool (Steve)

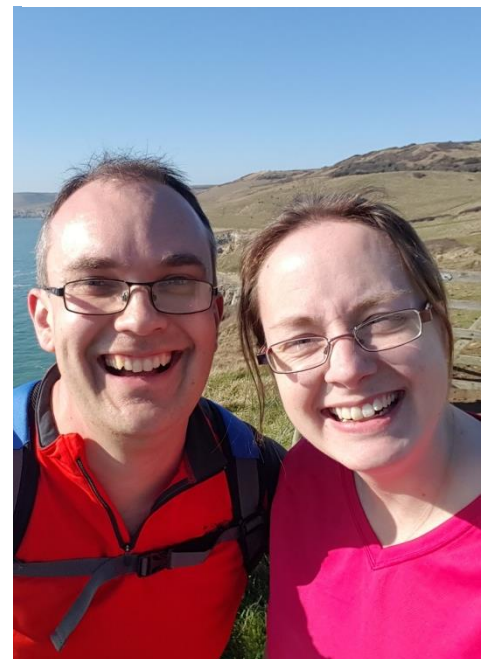
Fri 17-Sun 19 Mar: European Student & Staff Conference in Holland (Steve)

Wed 29 March: Missions Team Meeting in Glasgow (Steve)

Sat 8 April: Southern Quadrant Connections Day in Reading

Mon 10 to Sat 22 April: Family Holiday in Glasgow/Lake District

Fri 12-Sun 14 May: Reps Conference in Swanwick (all)



Our Address: 53 Harefield Road, Southampton, UK, SO17 3TG

Home Tel: 02380-677557, Steve Mobile: 07852-233960, Debs Mobile: 07767-145012

Email: steveanddebs@the-mcclures.co.uk, Skype: [steve.debs.mcclure](https://www.skype.com/name/steve.debs.mcclure), Twitter: [mcclure1978](https://twitter.com/mcclure1978) / [mcclure1980](https://twitter.com/mcclure1980)

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