Experiencing God in Another Nation

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Hans's Testimony:

From February 26th – March 20th of this year, I had the privilege of visiting Joshua Generation Church (JoshGen), South Africa, and it was amazing!

Church Back Home

The church that I am part of in the Netherlands, is called Living Waters. We meet in a very tiny village called Hekendorp, in our beautiful venue: de Boezem. Our church family come from the surrounding area. We planted a year ago, and our congregation now has around 70 members, including lots of kids. While we have three Home Groups, because of COVID, every Sunday, one Home Group has to meet separately from the others.

Learning & Growing in South Africa

From Christmas until our Summer Break (which starts in July), I had some extra time. Peter, the leader of our congregation, felt the Lord saying that I should go to South Africa to get equipped and grow in leading worship. Being from a Dutch Reformed background in our country, we are used to some distance in our worship and mainly just play the songs, one after the other. However, God has been changing our worship culture and we are ready to learn more.

In South Africa, I stayed with Mervis and Sonja van der Merwe and their family. During my stay, Michael Joubert and Mervis taught me about leading worship, everything that goes on behind the stage and how it really is a lifestyle. There were endless exercises in which we sought the Lord to worship from that place, and it opened my eyes to a whole new world.

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The Gift of Tongues

On my second evening, we worshipped with some church friends around the piano. It was beautiful. Right before I went to bed, I prayed to God, who had set me on fire that evening. At a certain point, I just said to God: "I will just be quiet so You can talk to me". And then it happened, right after I had spoken that out – He gave me the gift of tongues, and it just started flowing. My tongue went everywhere and the words just kept on coming. This was the first time I had ever prayed in tongues, and no-one specifically prayed for me to receive this gift; it was really God just giving it to me.

Prophetic Equipping

I was able to attend the 'Awake' prophetic sessions that took place at JoshGen in Sunningdale. The evenings were amazing. During my time in South Africa, we talked a lot about the skillfulness of the heart and that it is not just about knowledge. I learned how to persevere in seeking God's presence, surrendering and letting Him conquer me – letting Him make me wild again. It is so cool that, although the evenings were about prophecy, the main thing that I got out of the sessions was that while prophecy is a beautiful gift to receive from Him, He Himself is so much more beautiful. It really is about proximity, seeking Him and looking Him in the eyes. It felt like every evening, Mervis stood in front of everyone during worship, saying: "Don't try to receive a word, just seek His face." The sessions were about making prophecy about God instead of about the prophetic itself. This is something not only to apply in the prophetic but in every aspect of our lives. We are always first a priest, then a prophet, teacher, apostle, and so on.

> **"… God softened my heart to serve Him in a new way."**

A Softened Heart

During my time in South Africa, God softened my heart to serve Him in a new way. In the end, I think this is the main thing that I took away. A lot of the softening in my heart happened during the evenings because I really could come close to Him. Also, by encountering the people of JoshGen, I saw such humility and meekness, which is just something that grabbed and wondered me. In the end, there is not a definite point at which I could say, "there God softened my heart". Over my whole time in Cape Town, God had been working and massaging it in.

Returning Home

God prepared me in the three weeks in South Africa to minister to Him and His church in the way

He wants in the Netherlands. The challenge right now is to try and find a way to implement the lessons and habits learned. We look forward to seeing what He will continue to do in our worship!

The Buitelaar-Prins and Gerritse-van Veldhuisen families arriving at Cape Town International Airport.

Others Coming to Be Equipped

Following Hans' visit to South Africa, two other families from the same church also took the opportunity to visit JoshGen, be equipped and build relationally. Wim and Elizabeth Gerritse-van Veldhuisen, along with Gerrit and Laura Buitelaar-Prins and their children, Jesse (3 years) and Timo (1 year), visited South Africa for the month of April. Like Hans, they came with a heart to be exposed to everyday Christian living and to grow in the area of prophecy. It was an incredible opportunity to catch the heart behind what the local church does and to be personally stretched. During their stay, they visited various JoshGen congregations across the Western and Southern Cape and had the opportunity to worship with other believers, attend leaders meetings, witness water baptisms, be prayed for, share at meetings, and even join in on the congregational camp in Mossel Bay.

Their visit was not without sacrifice, both financial and personal. Both ladies travelled internationally while pregnant, and while Gerrit and Laura bravely travelled with two toddlers, Wim and Elizabeth had to be separated from and leave their children behind, which meant Elizabeth had to return to the Netherlands a little earlier. Nevertheless, they would testify that it was so worth it to experience God in another nation – to see how the local church builds according to the New Testament Biblical pattern and take back what they have learnt and share it with others.

Both saints in the Netherlands and South Africa look forward to hearing many more testimonies about the impact of these visits to South Africa and the Netherlands into the future!