# From Friends to Family

Nadene Badenhorst 10 September 2019



Recently, Melanie du Toit and I had the privilege of spending a week with Kingdom Community Church (KCC) in Richards Bay, KwaZulu-Natal. KCC is led by Gerrit and Cherie Loots, who were part of Joshua Generation Church (JoshGen) for many years (and served as community leaders for some time) before moving to Richards Bay. Having visited different churches in the area, they could not find anything that reflected Acts 2:42 living the way they have experienced in JoshGen and felt prompted to start something.

Two and a half years since they planted KCC, the church has grown to about 120 people (of different ages, backgrounds, race etc.), with new believers being added all the time. It was wonderful to see Jarred and Niqui Carlton there, long-time 'JoshGenners' who have also since moved to Richards Bay and are now on the KCC eldership team.

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One of the first things that struck us was how warmly we were received by everyone. Only on the rare occasion did we have to go introduce ourselves! It was also immediately evident that people were excited and hungry to receive what the Lord had to impart through us – even if it meant stepping out in faith and risking doing things they had never done before, like sharing a prophetic encouragement with someone else. At the prophetic workshop on the Wednesday evening, many were encouraged as they practised hearing God and were used by Him to

encourage, exhort or comfort (1 Corinthians 14:3) a brother or sister!

On the Friday, we spent some time with the leaders and shared what we felt prophetically for the church, and also for individuals, before joining the rest of the church for an evening of worship outside in the garden. And this is where, for me personally, I again had an "aha" moment: this is why, through Freedom of Religion South Africa (FOR SA), we fight for religious freedom in South Africa – so that we can keep on freely meeting in one another's homes, singing and praying to Jesus (even sharing the Gospel) under the open sky, without fear of the neighbours reporting us to the police for having a religious gathering. This is why – so that people who do not yet know Jesus may hear the Good News that He died for our sins, but that He rose again and is still doing miracles in lives today! How wonderful it was to see close to 20 people respond to Jesus over the course of the weekend (including a number of first time salvations) – souls rescued, eternities changed!

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On the Saturday morning, Melanie and I did a workshop on evangelism and the prophetic with the ladies. Expecting about 30 ladies to arrive, the house was soon packed with 50 ladies (including some from our Four12 Partners Pongola Christian Centre) eager to be equipped and activated in sharing the Good News of Jesus with friends and family. A number of ladies responded to Jesus and the call to confess His Lordship in front of others on the day – thank you, Jesus! Many more responded to words of knowledge and the call to be (re-)filled with the Holy Spirit, with at least two ladies speaking in tongues for the first time! We were greatly encouraged to hear testimonies of ladies having opportunities to witness and share the Gospel with their unsaved friends literally hours after the workshop ended, and stepping out in boldness to pray for the sick.

Even though God had done so much already over the weekend, He still had more in store, and met with us in an amazing way at church on Sunday morning! Again, we saw that when we are prepared to wait on God and linger a little longer – even when it gets uncomfortable and we are not sure where to next – He takes us even deeper! It was a special morning of celebrating testimonies of God's work in and through us, and prophetic encouragement to the Church – to keep on loving one another, for it is by our love that people will know we are Jesus's disciples (John 13:35), and to keep on taking ground little by little, united in heart and purpose, for it is a good land, worth fighting for!

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And so a wonderful week of spending time with (some old, and many more new!) friends came to an end. As always, we were blown away by God's faithfulness and goodness in meeting with us and doing what only He can do! What a joy to be part of building God's church and extending His Kingdom in South Africa and the nations! In the words of Kimber (Gerrit and Cherie's nine-year old daughter), 'They came as friends but left as family, because we all love Jesus.'

What are you waiting for? Just say 'Yes' and Go!