Hello from Hoedspruit

Ivan van Vuuren 18 August 2015



(‘**Hoedspruit**‘ – an Afrikaans word meaning Hat Creek)

The book of Acts describes the planting of new churches as the most effective means to disciple people and demonstrate authentic Christianity in local communities. In the last year, we have been privileged to see two congregations planted in Harare, Zimbabwe and another one in Pretoria (Church Zao). Now we can add Hoedspruit to that list- a small tourist and agricultural town near the Kruger National Park in South Africa.

Over a month ago, we sent out Ivan and Margaret Van Vuuren (who served as elders in JoshGen) who felt called to plant in Hoedspruit. Hoedspruit is strategic because of the number of international tourists who pass through. It is where the nations gather and the Van Vuuren’s are trusting the church will be able to reach many internationals as well as the local community. What is phenomenal is that this couple are well into ‘retirement age’ yet they are pouring their lives out for Christ. Some say retire, this silver-haired couple say re-fire!

Here is some feedback Ivan and Margaret have sent us regarding the church plant so far:

Well, this has been a very eventful and fruitful few weeks and God has certainly stepped in and

helped us to meet some interesting people and lead us into unexpected areas. We have had some divine appointments by meeting up with a few folks who are very keen to assist in establishing a work here in Hoedspruit.

God has certainly dealt with me regarding numbers and confirmed that I must not despise small beginnings. This has not been easy as I want to see so many people just waiting to jump in and get going. But God has a different plan and I must learn to respond to His plan and not mine. Our biggest challenge is getting to know these folk and winning their friendship. We have dropped seeds along the way in preparing them for Bible studies starting with a midweek gathering. This will take place now that we have at last found a home where we can meet.

We are also meeting up with a number of African pastors later this month who are battling on their own and need some guidance in various
areas. We have mentioned that we will be available to assist in any way possible so we are looking forward to this in the future,

We have been encouraged by the number of SMS messages and phone calls received from many of you together with the prayers for us. This is greatly appreciated. Also, there have been quite a few folks who want to come and assist us as well.

At present we are searching for a hall or school to meet so please pray that God will open the right doors for this need. I do believe that once we have a 'GATHERING PLACE' we can expect results and see some growth taking place. Right now we are doing our best to meet people but sure having a meeting place will make the difference.

We hope this gives you a picture of what is happening in this side of the world. Please convey our love and greetings to the family who we miss so much and we look forward to seeing you all in October at the Four12 conference.

Yours in his service
Ivan & Margaret

What a privilege to partner with this young church plant to see God's kingdom break in and in turn affect nations. Please keep the Van Vuurens in prayer as they continue to seek God for increase and growth, especially new salvations. Watch this space!

*Since this article was published, Ivan van Vuuren Snr has gone to be with the Lord. Margaret van Vuuren still faithfully serves the church and is loved and supported by her children.