

A Letter from The Pavilion in Birmingham...

Dear Friends

Earlier this year I attended a conference in the states on church planting. At the conference, I heard someone speak of a fear in the states that the flower of faith had ripened in the US and it was casting its seed across the world, sending missionaries like seeds before itself died. They likened this process to what they had seen in the UK.

I was saddened by this! Later that year I was on holiday again in the States and visited a rodeo expecting bulls, horses, cowboys and gals and although I saw that, I also experienced something else. The event opened with the MC sitting on a horse who rode into the arena and had everyone stand up and sing the star spangled banner and then he said " while we are on our feet lets give all the glory to God" and then lead a 5 min prayer, wow! All stood! All prayed! I knew I was in 'church' at that moment. I know that as long as a man on a horse can call a secular crowd to pray like that with no explanation, no condemnation and total respect from the audience, the country's faith had not gone to seed, it is alive and well!

I worry for England that the speaker's thoughts on our fair country are right in part, we have many passionate churches and many passionate Christians who are giving their lives to Jesus' mission here on earth, but it's hard. Going to church is not the cultural norm, being a Christian in England is tough; our secular culture envelops and consumes us. The church is in battle like never before! But know this friend - the battle belongs to the Lord!

As I write to you seeking your support in our battle, I am full of hope for the future. I know that that we can win this battle and I am overjoyed to be working with my brothers and sisters in the states to that end.

Our church here in Bournville, an area of Birmingham, has undergone some changes of late, I see the Holy Spirit moving amongst our congregation and in the community in which we are placed. God has grown our congregation from 30 – 70 people in 2 years. We have extended our youth work from 12 "church kids" in 2004 to 90, mostly un-churched kids today. We employ 2 youth leaders working in and through local junior high schools (sadly due to lack of funds we are losing one youth worker this year and are seeking funding as I write).

We run our church home as a community centre, a centre that has on average 1300 un-churched people through our doors every week. We are a busy and vibrant church, but a church that is boxing above its weight - we have too many

opportunities and not enough workers for the task! We have been building fast and have not been in a position financially to create a ministry structure to support our growth. That is why we have sought Alysen's help!

When you grow people, there are always new people who need to be loved on the journey, held and helped. The busier I have become the less effective I have been as a pastor. When one is driving hard, often you find yourself watching the road ahead not looking to those in the car with you. I have seen the gap in our ministry and I have asked Alysen to fill it.

I have asked her to join us as our discipleship pastor. Her role will be to love, hold and encourage the saints as we move forward into mission. She will lead and encourage our small group's ministry, which currently consists of 60% of our church. She will also work to integrate new people into the ministry and body.

I see Alysen as a mature passionate young woman who has God's hand over her life. I believe she will be a blessing to us here at the Pavilion and I seek your support of her as she steps into this role at The Pavilion. It is my heart's desire and prayer to see The Pavilion grow and be in a position in the next 2 years financially provide for Alysen's role. I will be working with her and my team of elders to work towards that goal.

Its is hard to give you a true taste of who we are through this letter so I would urge you to visit www.the-pavilion.org where you can read more about us and pick up some of our key messages. I would point you towards the messages entitled Our City in Ruins – Nehemiah, The Yearning for Community, and Nehemiah 4: Filling the Gaps. These sermons appear on our website under the page entitled "Sunday Messages". They will give you a taste and sense of our journey and calling as a church.

If you have any questions that may aid your thoughts and prayers, please call or email me.

Yours truly,

Paul Clarke
Pastor of The Pavilion