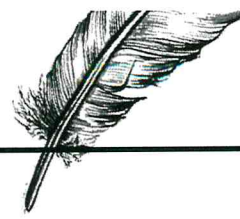


City Church

MANCHESTER



Dear Brother / Sister,

We are writing to commend Jeff and Shawn Schofield to you as they prepare to move over to Manchester, England to serve at City Church Manchester.

Manchester is the UK's second largest city with a population of just over 2.5 million. It grew by 19% over the past 10 years and its city centre doubled in population during that time. Manchester is home to four Higher Education Institutions (including the largest single-site university in the country) and approximately 95,000 students. It is also a hub for the creative and media industries following the re-location of the BBC and ITV to Manchester. Alongside such indicators of growth, however, there are troubling trends in social and economic deprivation. Manchester is ranked as the 4th most deprived district in England with 33,134 residents living in the most deprived 1% of sub-districts in England. While the city is served by several gospel-centred Bible teaching churches, they are few in number and mostly located in the southern suburbs of the city. Research undertaken by Peter Brierley has shown that church attendance in Greater Manchester has fallen from 8.2% in 1989 to 4.7% in 2012.

It was because of these needs and opportunities that City Church was planted in the city centre of Manchester in September 2014. The church has three central aims: (1) Reaching those who live, work or study in Manchester with the gospel; (2) Growing one another in our love for God through expository Bible teaching in a loving church community; (3) Sending men and women to support and plant churches in Manchester, the north-west and beyond. Having started with a core team of 27, we have since grown to 130 regulars with a further 40 being more occasional visitors. We have seen a number of conversions and eight baptisms over the past 18 months. The church has grown in age and ethnic diversity with more than 20 nationalities now represented. It has also diversified socio-economically and we have wonderful opportunities to serve the more marginalised members of our community.

The past two years has seen rapid growth and multiplication of ministries but, in autumn 2015, we recognised that the biggest barrier to further growth was a failure to provide the operational infrastructure to implement and maintain our ministries. We prayed and approached Kent Bailey (Campus Outreach International Director) to ask whether they might have an outgoing CO Administrator who would consider serving with us for 2-3 years. We were pleasantly surprised to hear that Jeff, the Director of their Global Resource Center, might be interested. Then followed numerous online meetings between Jeff and the elders of City Church. It quickly became apparent that Jeff was a wonderful fit for City Church and vice versa. We conducted a formal interview at the end of March and brought Jeff, Shawn, Rebekah and Rachel over to visit for a week in May. The City Church family loved the Schofields and could see, just as the church elders had already seen, that the imprint of the Lord's hand was on every aspect of the process to date.

The plan is for Jeff, Shawn and the family to arrive in Manchester in September 2016 and for Jeff to begin his work as Operations Director at City Church from 1 October 2016. This role involves operational oversight and strategy in the areas of staffing, legal compliance, IT and facilities; but more fundamentally Jeff will take a lead in the training and discipleship of our volunteer ministry team leaders. Jeff will also be involved in providing the operational support for launching a church planting network in Manchester in 2017 with a view to us planting a church in September 2019. Jeff will remain a partner with Campus Outreach by serving the international resource staff in a coach/mentor role.

The Lord has been very kind to City Church since its launch nearly two years ago and we have seen God's wonderful kindness in the provision of the Schofields. The harvest field in Manchester is ripe and we have been praying for more workers (Matthew 9:38). We would be delighted if you would consider supporting the Schofields in prayer, encouragement and financial giving.

Warmly in Christ,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Matt', written in a cursive style.

On behalf of the Elders of City Church Manchester

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