

10 Nowers Street
King William's Town
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February 2009

Greetings to you all in the name of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ.
Ndiyanibulisa egameni likaYesu Kristu, umSindisi wethu.

Holidays are now over and the new college year has started. We had a great opening service and induction day this week with many new students as well as our returning ones. Even though we tried to be very strict with closing dates, we are still having people coming in wanting to sign up for studies. A great problem but it does make organizing the printing of handouts, class lists, etc very difficult. With a big intake, we also need to duplicate computer classes as we only have five computers for teaching.

Over the past month, it has been very difficult to get into the computer room as it has been full of piles of brand new books waiting to be catalogued and put on the library shelves. Some of these have come from donations of books sent over from the UK and Australia. Others have been bought with money gifted primarily from the church in Australia but also from the ongoing kindness of friends in the UK and beyond. We are very grateful for the kindness and generosity that has been shown in this way. It will make a huge difference to the students and the lecturers. We have also opened the library to outsiders who can register as library users. This has also meant that the growing library is benefitting the ministers and churches in the area as well.

We have lost a couple of rooms in the college which have been made into bedrooms for staff and students who have found it difficult to get housing. This is a very real problem for many of our students and staff members and one which we need to address along with new premises for offices, classrooms, library and so on. The Dumisani properties continue to be a matter of serious prayer and consideration.

We are conscious as we mark Dunisani's thirtieth year of existence how far God has taken the college and we praise God for all he has done. We look forward too for his guidance as to how to proceed. We find in so many areas of our work that our enthusiasm is constantly tempered by finances and time. Please pray that God will provide what we need to be able to move in the direction he would have us go.

On the topic of money, let me tell you about a frustrating time I had this month. I received a phone call from one of our church members asking me to meet her the next day. As I read the text message, my heart sank. I knew it could mean only one thing – she needed money. There have been so many situations over the last couple of months where we have had to help out so many people in different ways, and are conscious of how much of our money goes in helping others. The cynical side of me was saying, 'people only want you as a friend for your money'. People see a white skin and think because we are paid in pounds that we are very well off.

I met the lady as requested. I had thought that she would ask me for about R200 (about £15) and wasn't prepared for the request for R1800. (about £130) I tried to explain that I just did not have that kind of money even in a savings account, but as she told me her story, I knew that we would have to find the money somehow. I managed to find someone with a charity budget and the money was paid to the necessary place. This whole issue of need is one of the hardest things that I have ever faced. Hardly a day goes by when we don't have someone needing money or help. I find it very distressing when I am not able to help and the temptation is to keep on giving and helping and finding ourselves in financial troubles. There are definitely some people who just chance their luck by asking for help; yet for most, the need is very real and pressing. Even though we might not have the ready cash to help, we have so much in comparison to them. We have a large house, a car, adequate furniture, a choice of clothes and food on our table. Saying 'No!' is very hard.

As the college opened on a high note, we have also been very conscious of the devious work of the devil in action trying to frustrate the Lord's work. Please pray for our protection from the devil's schemes. We know that we are victorious in God.

This year's awards service is planned for 14 March. This year we hope to have an African academic speaking. He is Professor Derrick Mashau, Professor of Missiology at North-West University in Potchefstroom. This is always a day to look forward to and this year several students will receive their BTh degree.

Alistair and I were supposed to have spent a couple of weeks in Botswana before the college started. We were to have visited mission stations as well as a bit of sightseeing. Unfortunately, we weren't able to go as Bethany was hit by tick bite fever. She was really very poorly for a couple of weeks and while there was still the risk that complications could occur, we didn't feel that we could leave her. So if you want to find out about Botswana, you will have to talk to John and Elizabeth Ross. They were able to go and had a great time, including some useful talks regarding the possibility of offering some kind of training for pastors by distance learning and occasional lecturers' visits.

Bethany is much better now, although she has to be careful not to do too much that will put pressure on her heart as one of the main complications is enlargement of the heart.

Our next Sunday School teachers' training day is on Saturday 14 February, so we would appreciate your prayers for that. I have also been asked to go to Lesotho at the end of March to train Sunday School teachers there. I am really keen to do that and am very excited about the prospect. The only issue which we need to address is safety. I was hoping to go along with Suzanne Goosen who normally works with me in the Sunday School training. However, we have been advised that it is too dangerous for two white women to travel there alone. Flying isn't really an option as there are no flights there from this part of South Africa. Please pray for wisdom. We obviously don't want to turn down opportunities to spread the gospel and to build up the church in any way, but we also don't want to be reckless in our behaviour.

Another new development this year, is to open some of our Basic Ministry Studies lectures, one evening a week, to people who are not taking a full course. Alistair is giving open lectures every week which will take people who are interested in learning more about the bible but don't want to study for exams. There is already quite a lot of interest in that across the racial groups.

One of our most able students is staying on to do further studies and will also be involved in some of the teaching. He is a great guy and will fit in well with the staff.

Prayer points

Please pray...

- For the students as they start the new year, that they will work to get the most out of their studies.
- For the staff as they seek to teach in wisdom and truth.
- For the Awards Ceremony in March
- For the Sunday School teachers' training day.
- For wisdom regarding the possible trip to Lesotho.
- For Botswana and the church there.
- For Zimbabwe and its crisis.

Love to you all
Alistair and Jenny Wilson