

10 Nowers Street
King William's Town
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South Africa
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Dear Friends

I wish I could begin to describe to you adequately our trip to Lesotho. Susanne Goosen and I were asked to go to Lesotho to train churches in working with Sunday Schools and outreach. We were very keen to go as we are passionate about helping others to do this strategic work. Our plans were constantly frustrated as we encountered several hitches, including having our request for new passports rejected because the pictures of me showed my teeth! Anyway, after much prayer, the obstacles disappeared and Susanne, Alistair and I made the seven-hour journey to Maseru in Lesotho.

We had one quite surreal experience on the way to Lesotho. At the border, we got out and took our passports to the immigration office. After queuing for twenty minutes, our passports were stamped and we walked back to the car. On the way we passed a woman sitting at a table. 'Have you had your passports stamped', she asked. 'Yes', we said, pointing at the small building we had been in, just a few yards away. In the most condescending voice that she could muster, she said, 'That was South Africa. This is Lesotho. You need to get your passports stamped again.' Somewhere between the building and the table we had crossed between South Africa and Lesotho.

Forty teachers and church workers from about six different congregations came to the day-long meeting. I cannot even begin to describe the hunger that they showed for teaching, help and encouragement – all things that some of those who attended have had very little access to. It was a long day as we tried to pack as much teaching and support into the day as possible. The group were so responsive and so grateful for what we did. We brought a book stall with us. We weren't prepared for the level of interest that there was in the books and have a long list of orders for books and materials that we will try to get to Lesotho somehow.

In the west, we take so much for granted – education, money, breadth of experience, hope, support, resources, etc.

At the end, there was a queue of people wishing to thank us and talk to us about many issues; and about fifteen people enrolled in the Dumisani Bible Correspondence Course. They want us to return to cover more aspects of working with children. We will probably try to return next year, as we have had quite a number of requests for training over and above the regular training that we do in Dumisani several times a year.

We are constantly amazed by how many opportunities there are for training Christians in evangelism and teaching. So often we are struck by the deep desire of people to work to the best of their abilities and yet they are frustrated because they don't know how.

One of the teachers was asking us for ideas for working in her Sunday School which met under a tree with no chairs, tables or books. We were able to provide her with fun ideas of how to teach stories and memory verses which don't need resources other than a bit of initiative and enthusiasm. She went away with renewed enthusiasm for her work.

Another woman, a head teacher, took away a copy of our PowerPoint presentations so that she could use them in training her teachers in a local government school.

The following day, Susanne and I taught Sunday School in one of the churches and Alistair preached to the congregation. We had seventy children in our class made up of many different cultures, ages and nationalities. It was as close to heaven as I can imagine. The children sat so well during the stories and participated enthusiastically during the memory verses and singing. Again we were bombarded with deep questions: Where did God put our sins? Why could God not have saved us another way? Why did God descend into hell?

What a privilege it is to work for God here!

Another of the highlights of the trip was staying with Marieke and Christiaan who are missionaries in Lesotho with MAF. The five of us had such a lovely time of fellowship and we were struck yet again at how God's kingdom knows no boundaries. The

five of us represented four different countries and yet there was an instant bond as we shared with our brothers and sisters in Christ.

We also met Robyn who is from Inverness and is working in Lesotho with the street boys. We are so grateful to God for contacts such as these, so that the support base of people who are working in similar situations is increased. Please pray for Robyn too in her work.

Please pray for the churches in Lesotho as they seek to preach the gospel and build up the church of Christ in what can be a very difficult place to work. The people that we were staying with had a 24-hour armed guard patrolling their premises because of armed robberies and threats.

Although the main qualification that many students are working towards in Dumisani is a degree, we continue to respond to calls for lay teaching. Alistair teaches a general interest class in biblical studies in the evening which is well attended by many who are not part of the regular student body. Along with training the Free Church of Southern Africa Bible Women, we are now looking to start some training with the Methodist Bible Women. The demand for training for Sunday School teachers and Youth Workers has increased dramatically and we have also been asked to provide training for ministers' wives. The correspondence courses are also becoming increasingly popular and from time to time, there are training days held for church elders as well as open day conferences for church leaders in the area and other interested people.

Dumisani operates very much as a multi-level work. We try to provide good quality education that will stretch the minds of those studying and provide strong church leaders and teachers for the future. We also try to equip lay workers for the very strategic ministries that they are engaged in, and Christians who simply wish to grow in their faith. Our only constraints are workers and money! (Nothing new in that!) I am often reminded of the passage in John 4: ³⁴"My food," said Jesus, "is to do the will of him who sent me and to finish his work. ³⁵Do you not say, 'Four months more and then the harvest'? I tell you, open your eyes and look at the fields! They are ripe for harvest."

There is a harvest here ready to be gathered in. Please pray for workers – committed and dedicated workers – to preach the gospel, to train, to encourage, to support and to pray so that this land will blossom for God.






Next weekend we have the next Dumisani Day Conference. This time we have the well known British author, evangelist and apologist, Dr John Blanchard, coming to spend several days in East London and King William's Town. He will talk at the day conference and also in a couple of the churches in East London. He will talk on "Where is God when it hurts?" and "Meet the Real Jesus". Please pray for John as he travels through South Africa; that there will be a big turnout at these meetings in the Eastern Cape; and that God will meet the needs of those who attend and spur us on to greater evangelistic efforts.

On the home front, we are all well, although the large fluctuation in temperatures as we move into winter means that Bethany is once more quite susceptible to bad sinus and ear infections. She is busy with singing in the school choir and playing in the steel band. Stephen continues to do well in school and now towers over his mother. Rachel is now driving us everywhere having got her learner's licence and is waiting to hear the results of the first two modules of her horse riding instructor's qualification.

Love to you all and many thanks for your support and prayers.

Alistair and Jenny Wilson

Prayer Points:

-  Pray for the many aspects of work in Dumisani
-  Pray for the open day with John Blanchard on the 25th of April
-  Pray for the church in Lesotho as well as the church in South Africa
-  Give thanks that the trip to Lesotho went well
-  Pray for the upcoming elections that they will be peaceful