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King William's Town  
5601  
November 2008

Dear Friends

It was great to see some of you in October during my short trip to Scotland. At times I felt that it was a glimpse of what heaven might be like – meeting so many Christian friends all at one time. The only frustrating part about it was not having longer to chat to all the people who came to visit.

I was amazed at how quickly everything went – even down to the last tin opener and teaspoon. Many times during the ten days in Scotland, I marveled at how God had everything sorted out in advance for me. I thought that it might have been a traumatic time, cutting our ties (materially speaking) to the UK. I dreaded parting with pieces of furniture that had been given to us by churches with which we had been involved. For part of the time I was there, I stayed in our house with my mum. That was such a special time. But part of the time I was on my own and did what I love to do – read right through the night. One of the books I read was 'Living Sacrifice' by Helen Roseveare. If you haven't read her books, please do. She writes about her experiences as a missionary in the Belgian Congo. Her books are frank and brutally honest. She tells her story, warts and all. But much of her struggles with material things seemed to echo my own feelings. She talks about reading John 21:

*15 When they had finished eating, Jesus said to Simon Peter, "Simon son of John, do you truly love me more than these?"  
"Yes, Lord," he said, "you know that I love you."  
Jesus said, "Feed my lambs."  
16 Again Jesus said, "Simon son of John, do you truly love me?"  
He answered, "Yes, Lord, you know that I love you."  
Jesus said, "Take care of my sheep."  
17 The third time he said to him, "Simon son of John, do you love me?"  
Peter was hurt because Jesus asked him the third time, "Do you love me?" He said, "Lord, you know all things; you know that I love you."  
..... Then he said to him, "Follow me!"*

It seemed like God was asking me that question of all my furniture and belongings. Of course I had to reply, 'you know that I love you more than my leather sofa and my comfy pine bed.' And as each piece left the house, I was filled with such a sense of peace. I think I must be a rehabilitating materialist! Another of God's amazing provisions for me was in Johannesburg airport. I had a twelve-hour wait between flights. I had a book to read, so I wasn't too concerned. It was Francine Rivers' book 'A lineage of Grace'. As I sat down in the airport to read it, another woman sat beside me and took out her Francine Rivers book which was the 'Men of Faith'. 'Snap!' I said as I saw her book. We got talking and it turned out that she was returning from short-term mission work in Botswana. I haven't managed to contact her since returning and half wonder if she was an angel sent from God!

Alistair will represent the Free Church of Scotland at the Synod of the Reformed Churches in South Africa (GKSA) in Potchefstroom in January. Alistair and John Ross will then both attend a conference immediately after the Synod. Then Alistair and I, along with John and Elizabeth Ross, hope to spend about 10 days in Botswana following the Synod. This trip has been organized by the GKSA and we will be visiting a number of mission stations as well as going on safari! I heard on Sunday that there are no evangelical bible colleges in Botswana. What a mission opportunity! Please pray.

Please pray also for Zimbabwe. I have spoken to you before about it, but things are really getting desperate there. We have made friends with a young Zimbabwean couple who have come to South Africa to find work so that they can support their families back home. A week's wages of this professional woman in Zimbabwe could only buy a bottle of juice. They are to return by bus this week with as much food as possible for their family. We took large catering sizes of flour, sugar, rice etc to them this week as our contribution towards their efforts. Please pray that the food reaches their family and isn't stolen on the way. I am sure that you will also have heard about the outbreak of cholera in Zimbabwe. The death toll is in the hundreds and the medical structures are no longer in place to be able to cope with such a large outbreak. Please pray for them and also for the impact that this is having on South Africa.

The book shop and coffee shop continues to bring a steady stream of people into Dumisani. We have had a few church groups coming for coffee, wanting a bible talk or an introduction to the work at Dumisani. It is great to see the local churches becoming more aware of the resource and mission opportunity that is right there on their doorstep. Please continue to pray for Elizabeth, Angela and I as we serve and talk with the people who come in. We have had some very

useful conversations and several people have said how much they have appreciated having somewhere that they can come to for company and spiritual input. Already we dream about how we can knock walls down to make a bigger shop.

The day after I returned from Scotland, Alistair left for America. He attended two academic conferences in the Boston area. It was a good opportunity to meet with colleagues from throughout the world and to hear some excellent presentations on trends in biblical and theological studies. It was also a chance to share information about Dumisani with friends from the USA and beyond. He shared rooms with colleagues from HTC, which was a real highlight of the trip, and greatly appreciated the generous support given by HTC and other friends which made the trip possible.

The students have all left Dumisani for the summer break. Exams (and re-sits) are over, marks finalized and applications in for next year. It is a bit frustrating this year as North West University set a very early cut-off date for applications to the BTh degree. South Africa doesn't tend to work well with early cut-off dates. In the past we have even had people enrolling two weeks into term. This has come as a bit of a shock to many students and prospective students and even this week we have had several people wanting to enroll well after the closing date. We will, however, be able to put them onto our Basic Ministry Studies course or Advanced Ministry Studies for this year and credit them with courses when they start the degree next year. It looks like a good number of new students starting next year too.

A few months ago, I told you about the daughter of one of our cleaners – Mhlahli. We have been able to put her in a school for children with learning difficulties and have been amazed at how well she has progressed. It was her new school's closing service last night and she won a medal for the most improved student in the school. She has done so well. She has been accepted by a secondary school in East London for next year. She will learn hairdressing as well as some academic subjects and will stay in the school's hostel during term time. She is very excited about the opportunity that has been given to her. It is going to be such a different lifestyle for her coming from a tiny village house to living in the city in a large hostel. Over the last couple of months, we have been filling a large holdall with items of clothing and toiletries, etc that she will need in the hostel. When we gave it to her on Friday she was crying. She has never had so many possessions before. Please pray for her and her family as they let her go.

Since writing the first part of the letter, Rachel, Bethany, Tara, Shelley and I have been to summer camp along with another 1000 young people. The journey to Kimberley - where the camp is - is about 10 hours long. The temperature up there is much hotter than it is here. In fact, while we were there the temperature went up to 42°C. Despite the extreme heat, we had a wonderful time. Every morning and evening the young people sat and listened to deep sermons of an hour long with such enthusiasm and little sign of wishing they were elsewhere. It was wonderful to see many young people going forward for counseling after feeling God's call on their lives. On Tuesday, I helped to take about 100 teenagers into the local township for an outreach day. We were accompanied by a group of police officers and members of a local church so that those of us who didn't have Afrikaans or Sesotho could have a translator and also for follow-up work. The youngsters had been receiving training in evangelism at the camp and this was the climax of that work. What an experience it was! Even though most of these young people had been brought up in South Africa, many of them had never set foot in a township and found it quite a life-changing experience seeing the poverty and the fact that many of the people that they met had never heard of Jesus. One girl told me that as she spoke to a family, she had asked them if they knew Jesus. 'No', they replied and so she started sharing her faith with them. The man thought for a while and then said, 'I wonder why he was named after a swear word!' The youngsters came back asking that I take them again into the villages.

We have a new pastor starting in Bethany Emmanuel Church where we often worship. Rueben and his wife Patricia Ihlenveldt will start officially in January, although they already have spent quite some time with the congregation exploring ways of moving forward. They have a real missionary zeal and wish to work closely with Dumisani and are keen to develop stronger links with the church in Scotland.

Thank you again for your prayers and words of encouragement. We pray that you all get some rest over the Christmas period and feel enriched by the memories of the awesome gift God gave us and the evidence of that gift in the lives of our brothers and sister in Christ all these years later.

#### Prayer points:

- Pray that the students will get a rest but also will begin preparing for next session. Please also pray that they will enjoy a time of fellowship and safety as they journey to their families and home churches for the holiday season.
- Please pray for safety on the roads and when walking.
- Please pray for the young people whose lives have been touched by Christ at Summer Camp this year.
- Pray for all of the members of Dumisani staff as the office is closed for their summer vacation that they might feel rested after a very busy semester and that they are invigorated and full of vision for the next year.
- Pray for our children as they prepare for next year at school with all of its stresses and pressures.
- Give thanks that our house has now sold.

With much love

Alistair and Jenny Wilson