

Nick and Sheila Court – Serving the LORD in South Africa



Dear Family & Friends,

August 2006

SWYM Prayer letter 5

“The fear of the Lord - that is wisdom....” Job 28:28

It is spring and we have the expected strong winds in August. I, Sheila, am writing this prayer letter from Mabalingwe Nature Reserve. We are in the bush, amongst nature. The accommodation and scenery is very African. We are working on mornings, with the afternoons free for seeing game and wild life. This is a free holiday, courtesy of friends from church. What a gift! Oh, I just rushed out to see a family of hippos down at the lake. Earlier I took off my reading glasses to look through my binoculars and the winds blew my glasses clear off the table and over the balcony. Nick rushed down to rescue them, before any monkeys could swipe them and rush away. Thank God my glasses were not broken.

Anyway, I must concentrate now and bring you up to date. Since last month we have had meetings and discussions at CPBC about **a mission trip to Zimbabwe**. The final outcome was to postpone this mission opportunity until next year. Not many people had come forward to join us on this trip. Naturally, I was disappointed. However, only last week we met a family from Zimbabwe who are in ministry and who attend the very church we were intending to visit. They were at CPBC and heard that the trip was postponed. Over lunch, they heard of our involvement in the mission trip and gave us and Irving **a personal invitation to visit Bulawayo**, stay with them, learn of the needs, participate in ministry and bring back useful information to prepare the team from CPBC for the mission trip in 2007. Pray that we will get the required visas etc for this trip, possibly in December.

The joint weekend **outreaches in Tembisa** (a very large township between Johannesburg and Pretoria) seem established and therefore set to be ongoing. Pastor Irving Steggle is doing some Saturday Theological classes with the older youths and adults. The attendance is about 20 to 35 in these classes.

The **overnight Women’s Day camp** took place on the 8/9th August. 19 ladies attended. 17 were from Tembisa and 2 ladies from CPBC. That was a first! A first for the ladies at Tembisa to be at a camp, and a first for the two white ladies to be at camp with black African ladies. They shared the same dormitory and shared the mealtimes and teaching sessions together. In fact, it was a real encouragement to us to see the ladies from CPBC sweeping and cleaning up alongside the Tembisa ladies at the close of camp. One of the Tembisa women who have begun to teach at Bible Club did some of the leading of sessions with prior guidance and translating for Sheila from English to Zulu. Pastor Musa translated for Nick.

Nick and Sheila Court – Serving the LORD in South Africa

A funny incident was early morning when Nick went to the shower block. He quickly returned to fetch me to check who the voices belonged to that were coming from the men's showers. I went in to check and the ladies were most apologetic. They did not realise that they were in the men's toilets despite the clear signs. You see, a few of the ladies cannot read. I have asked the owner's wife if the signs could also be in pictures..... I have just seen a warthog walk past the window!

All the ladies expressed thanks for the teaching which Nick and I did. The outcome was amazing. All the ladies were asked to work in pairs. Their task was to **identify areas of service** within the church and to state where they might each be able to help. Every person present identified an area or areas that they felt they could help with in church. One lady from CPBC has agreed to help Tembisa with resources. The "shack church" located at the other end of Tembisa and in Pastor Musa's area, has no chairs. They all sit on the floor for church. Sophia has offered to get some chairs for them and the other young woman has agreed to do some bible teaching with the women in Tembisa. This was captured in writing for further action. In a month's time we will review progress. (Servanthood and Stewardship within the church were problems identified by Pastor Musa and his wife Kessia and were our brief to address during camp).

We thank God that we have His word the Bible to guide us and to give us a framework for servanthood and stewardship.

On August 25th to 27th, Nick and I attend the well established "**POWER**" Camp with some of the young people from CPBC (a "first" for us). We have been given responsibility, as leaders, for the Friday **JUMP (Jesus Understands Me Perfectly)** group for primary age kids at CPBC. Nick, as Deacon at CPBC, has been busy organising the annual **Church Family Camp** (attendance 70+) from the 22nd to 24th September, when Pastor Irving Steggles will be the speaker (a "first" for Nick). The topic for the church family camp is "Living Together as the people of God." As you can see, August and September are very busy months.

In October, we go to **Clarens** (in the Drakensberg Mountains) for an **outreach**. The daily programme is already full with assemblies, bible club and with the orphans' feeding programme. However, we do want to have a full day with kids identified from the orphans, school and bible club during the week, to have a more in depth bible study/school with them on the last Saturday (another "first"). We need your prayers for wisdom and stamina. .. a beautiful bird is sitting on a tree...flown off now.

The **Swaziland assignment** will take place on the 5th – 7th September 2006. Pastor Irving Steggles will be accompanying us and he will be doing some teaching and encouraging the leadership. Please pray that we will have Godly wisdom to assess the current young people's ministry at the church, make and implement recommendations. We are also going prepared to do some training sessions to help those working with children and young people. Do pray for us.

We are pleased to announce that we have been able to organise **camp at Ora et Labora for the teens from three other churches**. The dates are set for Monday 25th September to Friday 28th, immediately after the church family camp. Dr. Gray who owns Ora et Labora has been very generous in letting us use his farm/conference centre for no charge whatsoever. Thank God for his generosity. Nevertheless, transport to and from this very rural, pleasant place and food expenses for a week of camp will be too much for these youths who are below the poverty line.

Nick and Sheila Court – Serving the LORD in South Africa

The site manager, Neil, has agreed to do all the cooking, but we need to provide the food, and if you know me you will know that I am more than glad to have someone else in the kitchen! I am more than happy to teach, where the bible allows, negotiate place, plan menus, do registration/ indemnity forms etc but not to cook for 60 people! Oh, monkeys all around, one cheeky little one peeped in through the door.

The most economical price to cover meals for one person for the week is R50.00 or £5.00. Transport may well cost the same amount but that will be unaffordable for the majority of the youths. The maximum we can have at the camp is 60 young people.

Please pray that the monies will come in for us to run this camp. Do not become too complacent - this is another "first." Nick will be doing all the main teaching and he is in the process right now of preparing the bible teaching as I write this letter.

The Pastor and his wife, **the Whitakers, from Walkerville**, will be visiting us on Monday 21st August for a working lunch. They want advice on suitable Sunday School literature and we have some "Go Teach" books we can pass onto them for a trial period if needed. They would also want to talk about the September camp.... Tribal war outside ... a family of grey pigs were chased off by a family of brown warthogs....

Items for Praise:

Despite the strong winds, my spectacles were not damaged when blown over the balcony

For the unexpected and personal invitation to Bulawayo, Zimbabwe

That the Tembisa outreach is becoming established and a good number of people from CPBC are willing to be part of this outreach

For the amazing outcome of the bible teaching and interest for service expressed at the women's day camp

For the promise of chairs for the newly erected "shack church" at Tembisa

That Nick had another preaching opportunity at Birchleigh Baptist Church

For God's mercies and kindness to us through the growth of SWYM ministry in areas of Camps and the weekly JUMP group

For safe personal and travelling mercies everyday

Nick and Sheila Court – Serving the LORD in South Africa

Items for Prayer:

For the Tembisa ladies' spiritual growth and commitment to areas of service within the church

Wisdom and insight for the Swaziland assignment

Wisdom and insight in planning the September inter-church youth camp

For the monies and goods to come in to help fund and sponsor the youth for September camp

That God will use us to grow the ministry of JUMP and that the kids will come to faith

For the continued joint weekend outreaches in Tembisa

For the forthcoming POWER Camp, Family Camp and Clarens outreach

That God would use our regular school assemblies to save learners

For safe personal and travelling mercies everyday

You are absolutely vital to the work of Step Wise Youth Ministry. Please pray that together, our efforts will continue to grow and bear good spiritual fruit. We trust that this prayer letter will show you some of the answers to your prayers.

In His Service

Nick and Sheila Court

Contact details:

Postal Address:

Nick & Sheila Court, PostNet Suite C335, Private Bag X 18, Lynnwood Ridge, 0040, South Africa.

Telephone: 011 391 5905

Mobile telephone: 072 959 5743.

Email: nick.sheilacourt@telkomsa.net and/or nick.sheilacourt@tiscali.co.uk