

Nick and Sheila Court – Serving the LORD in South Africa



Dear Family & Friends,

December 2006
SWYM Prayer Letter 7

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

This Christmas, let us give thanks for Jesus, God’s son, the most precious gift to all mankind. Rejoice and celebrate our Saviour’s birth.

For SWYM, it is a timely opportunity to give thanks and praise for God’s wonderful answer to your prayers and our prayers. We have been kept safe and God has blessed us with joy in service for Him. Many new and exciting invitations and recognition came from the schools in addition to the Christian assemblies. We were **special guests** at the schools for end of term concerts and prize giving. About the special guests and public thanks for our input into the schools, we did not know that until we were actually there for the events. Nick was asked to open in prayer at **Busy Bees Primary Prize Giving** and we gave out the awards to the Grade 7 learners followed by photographs etc.

Prior to end of term, we had taken extra classes at the schools, some jointly with Nora. We were overwhelmed for what the Lord had done in the hearts of the staff and learners in accepting us so wholeheartedly.

The **Holiday Bible Club** conducted at Birchleigh Baptist Church was a first at the church, and what a blessing! A few people came simply to observe what goes on at a Holiday Bible Club! The theme was “Turned Around”. Nick did most of the Bible Stories and I, (Sheila), particularly enjoyed telling a chapter of the Missionary Story each day. The crafts sessions were a great success because we had “expert” help from two young women, Salome & Kirstie.

The biggest encouragement for Nick and I was when the three youngest and very shy 4-6 year old kids went all out to learn and recall each day the bible memory verses. Guess what? The team which had 2 of those kids gained the most points and won!

In October, we had an **outreach** at the township near **Clarens**. Thank you for praying because God certainly answered and blessed that outreach. We conducted school assemblies every morning at the local schools. Nick and I had to separately do these and at the Combined Primary, the Deputy Head translated for us each morning. Many of the teachers were present for our **assemblies**. For some of the Bible Stories like in the Raising of Jairus’ daughter and The Feeding of the 5,000, the **learners gasped audibly** at the power of Jesus to raise the dead and multiply the 5 loaves and 2 fish to feed everyone and have 12 baskets left over. We were invited each day to take Life Orientation classes in the intermediate school. The Head told us that our classes were so popular that she had had several requests for us to do more classes. We thank God that we could have taken the gospel into these classrooms. The **After School Club** was also a hit as 60 -100 kids attended each afternoon after we had spent some time ministering at the Orphans Feeding Programme. If you are wondering how we know the number of kids attending each day at club, it is simple. Nick knows by the bags & number of sweets given out at the end of club. **Rev Les & Elizabeth Jones** were able to visit us in South Africa and see some of our work first hand. They stayed over in Clarens one night and attended club, where they heard the kids sing a song that they had both taught us. We must add that Rev Jones did an excellent assembly with us at Busy Bees as well.

The bible **correspondence course** launch at Clarens went very well. We had 18 kids attend, by invitation, and Nick taught that morning. We learnt a lot! We taught the group how to look up in the bible index to find the book, then the chapter and verse. What a privilege to open the bible with them. Joseph Mokena, from Clarens, was a constant team member and the 3 of us were needed to help the kids find the bible texts to answer the questions. Nick has since rewritten some of the course material, and as we are invited **to Clarens again** in February 2007, and we shall introduce the revised course there.

We were kept busy at Clarens but felt in a tangible way the help and guidance of the Holy Spirit. We also shared about SWYM at the Dutch Reformed Church, did a bible story at their youth group and spoke at a House Group. The folks at Clarens always give us lovely accommodation and a cooked meal provided by the church each day as well as other breakfast goodies in the fridge and cupboard. All that makes a big difference.

The last end of year Friday **JUMP (Jesus Understands Me Perfectly)** was a great encouragement and blessing. The kids were asked to dress as characters from the bible and they had to speak about their character

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with the group. Well, these kids not only took the dressing up seriously but the telling about their character was even more serious. God is so good to us and we cannot thank you enough for your prayers and remembrance of us.

Nick and I had a “**retreat away**” in the bush. This was organised by some friends and we were allowed to stay free. We were glad to have some quality time together in this quiet place. We were the only guests. For the first two days, the owners of Salem, the retreat, said they were concerned as they did not hear or see us around! We made up for that the rest of the week as we enjoyed walks, observed the wild life, swam, read good books, etc and chatted to the owners & resident families. We felt that we had recharged our batteries before attempting the Birchleigh Holiday Bible Club.

The invitation to Bulawayo, **Zimbabwe**, is on for the 15th -24th February 2007. Irving and Sheila got their visas yesterday. Nora and Sheila will be accompanying Irving where they will take the school/ college assemblies and women`s meetings. Nick will remain behind to cover our assemblies in South Africa. He is working on some resources for Nora and Sheila to take to Zimbabwe.

At present though, we are assisting Pastor Irving Steggles with the organisation of the **African Pastors Conference**, a first, for Pretoria. That is scheduled for the 18th -20th January 2007 at Ora et Labora, where we held camps during the year. Dr Gray is very generous once again in letting us use this place without a fee to him. We trust that a good number of African Pastors will attend and receive sound biblical teaching. This conference is the brainchild and **vision of Pastor Errol Hulse** from the UK. We are involved because of our township contacts and our desire to see Pastors receive and pass on bible truths to the young ones. We need your prayers.

Items for Praise:

- That the schools have accepted us as their spiritual teachers
- For the wonderful additional opportunities to share the gospel at the extra classes in schools
- That the outcomes of Clarens outreach/launch of the bible correspondence course were so encouraging
- That the kids who attended Birchleigh Holiday Bible Club all memorised scripture verses. May it bear fruit in their lives
- For Nora`s involvement and enthusiasm in the schools and work of SWYM
- Praise God that we got our Zimbabwe visas
- Thank God that we can be involved and contribute to the forthcoming African Pastors Conference

Items for Prayer:

- For the physical and spiritual safety of the children over the holidays
- For continued openings in the regular and new schools in 2007
- That many African Pastors will attend/benefit from the African Pastors Conference, 18th to 20th Jan 2007
- That the Bible Correspondence Course and outreach in Clarens will be a means of maturing young people in the faith, not only in Clarens but in other areas 3rd – 10th February 2007
- That God would use Nora ,Sheila & Pastor Irving in the Zimbabwe outreach from the 15th – 24th February
- For our ongoing personal and travelling safety everyday
- For another appropriate and mechanically sound vehicle
- Nick`s preaching engagement at Emmaus Baptist Church on 7th January 2007 in the evening

We hope that this letter will reveal to you just how much your prayers have been answered. We cannot do this ministry without your involvement and commitment. You are vital to the work of Step Wise Youth Ministry. Please pray that together, our efforts will grow strong and bear good spiritual fruit. Be encouraged for God is answering your prayers.

*Wishing you a peaceful Christmas and New Year
Nick and Sheila Court*

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