



Dear Family & Friends,

September 2007
SWYM Prayer Letter 11

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

It is spring, though some days feel like summer already. We have been busy. Today we must get this newsletter off for your information and prayers. Once again, we thank you for your kind interest and support for the work of SWYM. Where do I begin? First of all, we have been without telephone land lines and e-mail facilities for about 8 weeks. The telephone **cables were stolen** outside our street, not the first time this has happened and it seems like the cables may not be replaced. We have a pay as you go mobile/cell phone which is quite expensive for regular use. So we are exploring other “back up” means of communication.

Orphanage Building Ministry in Zambia. We undertook this unexpected mission trip with Jaco and Amber Joubert from the **18th July to 4th August.** What a blessing! **God answered prayers in so many ways.** We had journeying mercies, though the journey was not altogether straightforward. The three heavily loaded 4x4 vehicles, with trailers got us to the Mukumba Village and safely back. On the way, one of the vehicles had some electrical problems and we had to make a stop for Jaco, with some help from Nick to fix that, which they did successfully. We drove in convoy, with Jaco & Amber leading the way, Nick in the middle and Tunise & I, (Sheila), in the rear. We communicated with walkie talkies. We had to camp overnight on the journey through Botswana. One night when we were pitching camp in the dark, **Nick fell** down the steps of the tent which was on top of one of the trailers of one of our vehicles. **I laughed** which did not please him too much. Fortunately, **nothing was broken**, though he was badly bruised in a few places. Thankful to God for protecting us from harm and danger, like when **hippos were feeding** outside Jaco & Amber’s tent. We were glad we were in the “tree tops” tent.

All the building materials were taken through the borders having done all the paper work one bit at a time. In Livingstone, we collected the **American team**, with the Russian Pastor. All great big men with matching outfits, complete with church logos. A very encouraging start - as the long handled shovels and other useful luggage were packed into the trailers. We started our **journey to Mukumba**, with Nick negotiating and following Jaco’s “wheel steps”, over the many/deep potholes along the main road. Then we went off road and did this journey for about two hours with dusk quickly setting around us. **What a drive!** Deep ditches, a river bed, narrow tracks and dust galore! We were the second vehicle and the dust raised from Jaco’s vehicle literally obliterated the view ahead. We got there in the dark and immediately set to work putting up all the tents. It was intensely dark and the stars shone beautifully. We declined the cup of soup, zipped up our tent and dropped onto the air mattress deciding that in the morning we will **get our bearings.**

We did, and soon a routine was established. After early breakfast, the **men left camp** for the digging and building works. Remember, the sun is hot early on. Amber, Tunise and I, went and pumped water from the well washed dishes and started the **lunch meal.** You go and get the cabbage from a nearby field, wash each leaf and cut it up real small, before frying. The **chickens** - you run and catch them, kill them, dip into boiling water, pluck the feathers, cut up and cook in pot, on the open fire. The **sheema or pap**, (maize meal), you boil a lot of water, put a bowlful or two and stir in, then gradually add the rest until you get a thick mashed potato-like consistency. That is hard on your wrists to stir!

The men would return home all hot, thirsty and generally ready for something to eat before beginning the **afternoons work.** They were a well organised, well chosen group of men with different talents and skills, and an overall leader. **Woodbridge Baptist Church**, Virginia, did a splendid job of profiling the men and preparing them to work as a team. Humble and adaptable. We could **learn many lessons** from them. The vehicle Nick drove up, a 1969 Land rover, suffered a **broken rear differential**, when it was carrying one of its many loads of sand, dug from a river bed. Fortunately, it happened near to base camp. You see, the river sand was needed for mixing with the cement taken up from South Africa, and the bricks had to be made by hand as well. Two of the **men were skilled** and were able to fix the “Landi” as we needed it to get back to South Africa. On the journey back, Jaco drove that vehicle as he knows it so well.

The highlight for me was the school visits & Sunday school. We were able to minister as a small team in one of the local schools. The teachers **translated in Tonga** for all to understand. Some books and a football were given to this village school. They thanked us and then one boy asked if the football was just for the boys. The answer was that it was for all of them including the girls, which brought a big cheer from the girls. The teacher asked if we had a **whistle to give**, which the Americans did not bring, but guess what, **Nick happened** to have one back at camp. The next day we gave it to the teacher who promptly blew it to test its function. I have said a lot about this unexpected Zambian Mission Trip and yet that is just a flavour of some of what we did and experienced.

Zimbabwe Mission Trip & Conference - August 23rd to 5th September to Bulawayo, Zimbabwe and Lusaka, Zambia. Thank you for praying. God certainly **answered prayers**. Members from both Birchleigh Baptist Church (Pastor - Irving Stegges), and members from Constantia Park Baptist Church **responded generously** and prayerfully to this mission trip. We collected **lots of groceries**, tinned foods, toiletries, clothing and other items for the brethren in Bulawayo Church. Four vehicles went up, through Botswana again and everything, yes everything got safely through the borders into Zimbabwe! **Nothing confiscated, nothing charged**. Praise God for being a God who hears and answers the details of our prayers.

Nick & I had the pleasure of running **Holiday Bible clubs in two areas** - one in the morning and the other in the afternoon. We used the **same programme of bible stories for both Clubs**. We had good attendance and were pleased to give out the many fruit drinks, sweets, biscuits and Satsuma fruits. At the dense population (township or location), Club, they **had no water** so we could not mix the powdered drinks, that is when we thought of the **satsumas** which were given to us by a SA farmer, from the market. We **did not do a Bible Club** for the retired ladies in the residential complex. I am relieved for it would have been far too much for us. We visited them instead one day and spoke with many of them and the staff also. They at least had water from a **bore hole** and therefore could have baths but many of the staff did not have water where they lived. They said that they would go from house to house to try and beg **some water from others**.

The family, in whose cottage we stayed had a bore hole and they were supplying water to other church members. We **facilitated a Training Programme** for another group of Sunday school and Youth workers in Bulawayo and again supplied the biscuits, sweets and fruit mixes. They were thankful and pleased that they could **serve bread with margarine!** That was in very short supply. I noticed everyone ate all that was given out, nothing wasted. We did likewise and accepted their hospitality graciously. On the **return journey** from that training, John Stambolie, our host who had come to collect us went back to deal with **an emergency**. A young man had collapsed in the street, John assessed the situation, got help to get him into the car and took him to their house. This **young African man** had not eaten for nearly a week and had **collapsed with hunger** and exhaustion from walking. John's family gave him food and fluids, allowed him a bath and clean clothing. When **he was refreshed**, he told his story. He was trying to get across the Zimbabwe border with some friends into South Africa. Some how, his friends got across with any money he had and he **was left behind**. He had to make his way back from the border by foot to Bulawayo, about 150km, and further into Zimbabwe. The family **gave him some food** from the supply we had taken and gave him taxi /train fares. This is not an unusual story of desperation or generosity from one to another, friend to friend or friend to stranger. We were able to witness this one first hand.

The Pastor at the dense population church thought he could use our **bible correspondence course** booklets, so we gave him 30 copies for use.

After ministering in Bulawayo, we said our "good byes" and made our way to Victoria Falls on the Zimbabwe side. We had to fill up with some of the **unleaded petrol** that we had taken for personal use, and left some for our friends use. At the Falls, we went to get some food but the **electricity had just been cut off**, so no one could serve us. Somehow, you feel hungrier when you think there might be no food forthcoming. We did manage to **get some food** to eat at a place that was able to cook on gas; they had some, though that was more expensive. Anyhow, we visited the Zimbabwe side of **Victoria Falls** and enjoyed the beauty and majesty of God's handiwork. The next morning, we finally departed from the Zimbabwe border into Livingstone. We had to **wait for the official** who would sell us the necessary additional insurance and pay in Zambian Kwacha which we did not have. Whilst discussing how much we should change **inside** the immigration building, **a hand** came through the open window with the exact amount for our agreed sum we had decided to exchange. The "parallel market" in operation! Momentarily surprised, we **did the exchange**, but it did put me on my guard.

On the way along the same **Zambian pot holed** road we had done a month before, we stopped for a break. Before we were fully out of the vehicle, a man came running toward us, arms outstretched, shouting "I can't believe it, I can't believe it". **Taken aback** by this show of enthusiasm, I glanced closely and discovered that it was Urs Buff, a missionary friend from South Africa. He and his wife Esther and her brother had just stopped for a coffee. They were, as you guess by now, as **surprised to see us** as were to see them. They had been ministering in Zimbabwe and had detoured into Zambia to do some sightseeing before going to Bulawayo for further mission work. We enjoyed **coffee from them** as the shop had run out of coffee but as they were going into Zimbabwe they had their own supplies. The waitress gladly gave us the hot water and milk etc for little cost. We had a **time of fellowship** with them before going on in opposite directions.

We got to **Lusaka and to the Sola 5 conference** venue. From there we were all shown or taken by our hosts to their homes. Irving went to one family and his cousin Joyce from Newport, Wales to another and Nick & I were taken to a place on the outskirts of Lusaka. I have to add that our hosts owned a Safari Lodge. We enjoyed all the benefits that paying guests would enjoy in terms of accommodation and meals. In addition, we enjoyed friendship and fellowship not just with the host family but with other Sola 5 leadership Pastors also being hosted

Nick and Sheila Court – Serving the LORD in South Africa

at the Lodge. Everyone enjoyed fine Zambian hospitality and the bible teaching was superb at the 3rd Annual Sola 5 Conference.

During the conference we received many invitations for ministry to Zambia, Malawi, Namibia and Botswana. We had a three day journey back to South Africa and enjoyed the beauty of Africa, along the way.

Upon our **return from both Zambia and Zimbabwe**, we have sought to book in as many schools and teaching opportunities as possible locally. We have enjoyed **taking some life skills classes**, from a biblical perspective, at Aston Manor School. This is in addition to assemblies. The feedback from the Learners is positive.

Schools were on strike in June and we missed going to Clarens. We have **rescheduled Clarens** for early November. Once again, we have been **guests** at end of term concerts at Jeug Park and Sunny Side Primary. In August we had the Elson family from Emmanuel Evangelical Church, Chippenham visiting Irving and us. **Pauline Elson** was able to see three of our schools. Eileen and Cynthia from West Lavington Church were also with them. They all made it possible for Nick & me to **enjoy an Elephant Ride** at a nearby game park. **Eileen** and I also did a **Camel Ride**. It is good to have visitors from time to time, it forces you to take some time off in between work to relax and “smell the roses”. **Danelle said her “good byes”** to Busy Bee Primary and has left for a brief holiday and then off to the UK. She will be taking a Masters Degree at Durham University. We are the pleased **new owners** of her 3 years old Renault Megan. Danelle kept her car in a very good condition.

Inter School Youth Camp 24th to 27th September 2008. Dr. Gray has once again given us his camp site to use free of charge. Therefore, we can charge just **R50 per person** for all meals and accommodation. We pray that a good number of young people will take up this offer and that many will find lasting spiritual food as God’s word is taught by Nick. Gayle Staegemann, has prepared a number of Bible Correspondence **Booklets for devotional use** each day. We pray that there will be sufficient leaders and general helpers. **Rachel Webster** joins us from **Woodgreen Evangelical Church**, Birmingham and she will be cooking and leading the kitchen team during camp. I am still struggling with how much to buy, as we will only know the true number of campers on the morning of registration. Maybe when Rachel arrives, one of her first jobs might be to accompany me grocery shopping!

Items for Praise:

- Good health and daily protection
- The opportunity for physical and spiritual work in Zambia from 18th July to 4th August 07
- The wonderful answers to prayer for the Zimbabwe Mission & the blessings from Sola5 Conference
- For the additional life skills classes undertaken at Aston Manor Primary School
- The enjoyments of watching the children perform at schools` concerts.
- The “new car “ purchased from Danelle and getting our old car fixed too
- Camp at Ora et Labora at affordable prices
- Rachel Webster’s short term ministry at camp

Items for Prayer:

- Continue to pray that God will use the regular bible assemblies to make disciples of learners
- That Gayle will have much wisdom as she labours with the Bible Correspondence Books and that these books will help young people come to faith
- For physical and spiritual safety at the Interschool youth camp
- That Rachel Webster will be helped and encouraged in her mission trip to South Africa and at camp
- That the youth will be able to afford the minimal R50.00 for the camp from 24th to 27th Sept
- For a possible Prefects Training camp in October; our Clarens mission in November; Holiday Bible club at Birchleigh in December and a return trip in December to Zimbabwe for an African Pastors` conference in Bulawayo
- For more **SWYM** workers, full time or part time

Friends, we have been so encouraged by the many answers to prayer, that we are persuaded once again to carry on praying. Please continue to pray for the work of SWYM and for more workers to join us in fulfilling the call of the great commission.

With our love & prayers

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 and/or nick.sheilacourt@yahoo.co.uk

Nick and Sheila Court – Serving the LORD in South Africa

Website: www.swym.org