

# STEPHEN BUYS - JULY 2005 REPORT

July 2005

Dear Brethren,

July was an extremely hectic month for Wendy and myself.

Wendy has been busy with financial budgets at work and putting in midnight hours to get the work done and still have time to take leave.

The need for leave over this period was necessary as we hosted an American couple, Joshua and Erin Persall, from the Riverside Church of Christ in Nashville TN.

I have always said that Christians around the world are one big family and once again I was reminded of God's wisdom. The called of God are people of the same mind and spirit, those who live to obey and glorify His word. The fellowship that the early Christians had with one another is easy to understand but how often in our hectic lives do we forget just how important it is for Christians to spend time together encouraging one another and contemplating Godly things.

Joshua and Erin arrived in South Africa on Wednesday 6 July. They did not have much time to settle down as we left for Botswana on the Friday morning. The car journey to the border was uneventful although we did stop a number of times along the way. We had arranged to go through to the cattle post in Botswana where we would meet up with Warren Scholtz.

We arrived early afternoon - then horror of horrors - I was a wheel short. Somewhere along the drive in (about 7 hours) my wheelchair wheels had been taken out and one had been forgotten along the side of the road. Looking back it was very funny though at the time it was a problem as it limited my movements - even more than normal.

Fortunately there was - wait for it - a metal bucket - that was there correct height to fit under my chair.

At the cattle post we had been pleasantly surprised to find not only Warren but also Bryce Nerland - a young Christian we meet a few months ago with Les and Linda.

In sitting around the camp fire that weekend, the discussions centered on various aspects of God's word. For me it highlighted the fact that the Church faces the same challenges around the world. Satan knows our weak points and knows how to attack those within the Church. What encouraged me most was the fact that we all recognized the challenges facing us as young men striving to become pillars of the Church. We all recognized the fact that time is marching on and in due course our generation will be responsible for maintaining the purity of the Church and its continued growth.

The plan for the Saturday was to spend the time teaching in the local village of Mabua. However my lack of mobility meant it was impractical for Wendy and I to accompany everyone on the Saturday teaching trip. I am very happy to report that the Saturday teaching went very well and the group returned with two young women who wished to be baptized.

On the Sunday morning we parted from Warren and Bryce, leaving the cattle post and traveling to Mahalapye. With consultation with the men there I had arranged for a three-part lesson series on the Eldership and the need for Elders. Joshua was to take the first two sessions and I was to take the last session. As many of the members have to travel some distance the decision was to have all three sessions the same day that all could be there.

Upon our arrival at Mahalapye I was pleased to see that members of the Serowe congregation (about 80 miles away) had also made the lessons. I believe that the series went off very well and that the church was edified. The men in this congregation are taking a stand for the truth against institutionalism, which is prevalent around them. The effort that I have been putting in teaching this congregation has borne fruit in that they have ceased renting out the Lord's building. I am encouraged by the men recognizing the necessity for elders and that they are seriously investigating potential appointments.

After the meeting we left to return to South Africa and spend the night with Warren and his family on their game ranch outside Louis Trichardt. We arrived safely that evening and spent an enjoyable time together. Wendy and I had originally planned to leave on the Tuesday to come home - Joshua and Erin were staying with Warren from where they would be visiting with Dave and Joanne Beckley. However due to my wheel shortage we left early the Monday morning so that we could get back to Johannesburg before the medical spares store closed.

I preached in Little Falls on the 3rd of July and taught the mid week bible study. Thus the next Sunday, the 17th had Wendy and I traveling to the Church at Mabaloka - about 2 hours drive away for morning worship. My sermon was on how show you are a Christian to the world around you. Wendy continued her classes with the women and children of the congregation. Her topic was - clothing yourself with Christian virtues.

That afternoon I was due to preach in Nylstroom - about 1.5 hours drive away. The trip was safe and uneventful and we go home safely that evening.

Joshua and Erin returned to us after visiting with Paul and Helen Williams on Friday the 22nd. We had arranged a musical theory lesson with Erin on the Saturday - she is a grade school music teacher. Wendy and I invited interested Christians from four different congregations around us. We held a get together on the Saturday at our home and spent the time learning more about musical theory. South Africans as a whole have very little understanding of music since we do not study music at school. Many of us have little or no understanding of note values let alone different pitches. It is humbling to be reminded just how little you know - I always say I can sing all four parts - the only thing is I do it all at the same time. It was a wonderful afternoon spent having fellowship with Christians and we all mean to get together more often.

I arranged for Joshua to speak at Little Falls on the Sunday morning of the 24th and we were all edified by his lesson. Alan Fox invited us to join him and his family with the Brakpan congregation on Sunday evening. So after an afternoon of shopping for curios we went through. It was wonderful seeing some of the members of Brakpan - some of whom I have not seen since I was shot.

Tuesday Wendy and I took Joshua and Erin back to the airport from where they flew to London and then home.

While I had planned to spend the last weekend of July in Botswana again I decided to rather cancel the trip, we needed some time to recoup.

Thank you all for your continuous prayers and support.

In Christ's service

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