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September 2010

Dear Friends

As I sit down to write this letter, I realise that I haven't yet posted the letter that I wrote in August. August was quite a traumatic month for us. It was dominated by the public workers' strike. Although the schools that our children go did not strike they were closed for about three weeks due to intimidation and threats of petrol bombs. The girls' school was stormed and a couple of doors were broken down and the staff and children escorted out by armed police.

Rachel was due to sit her matric prelim exams. These were put on hold and then cancelled. It has been quite a frustrating time especially for the students in their last year at school, who are preparing for college and university.

Finances are very tight at present – both personally and at Dumisani. Because of the strong Rand and the low exchange rate for the Pound, as well as inflation, Dumisani's income is around 2/3 of what it was two years ago. Please pray, that God would provide and that we won't need to take drastic action. We have been tightening our belts considerably, and trying to work out what avenues of service are less important than others and where we can make savings, no matter how small.

Another ongoing trauma is the worsening drought. Water levels are now really low. There have been many prayer meetings for rain. We cannot use hosepipes and we are even being asked to clean our teeth as we shower! Many of the local dams are just muddy puddles or cracked mud basins.

Bethany's thyroid levels are now almost normal so that is an answer to prayer. She is a lot more buoyant in herself but still has a lot pain in her arms, legs, shoulders, back and hips. Hopefully now that her thyroid levels have stabilised, the other symptoms will start to improve.

Stephen has been accepted to study at Dale College School from January. We are very glad that he has been given a place there as it means that he will be able to stay at home and not have to either stay in the hostel or travel to East London each day.

Alistair, Deon, Victor and Shelley will be in Potchefstroom next week for the annual staff meetings of the colleges connected to North West University. The journey there is around twelve hours long and so it is a long way to travel for these meetings. As ever we ask for prayer for these long journeys. We don't take for granted road safety – especially in a country where there is no MOT and animals and pedestrians walk freely along the roads. The team are also hoping to meet up with other colleges with the view to greater cooperation.

We still haven't got the go-ahead for the school that I am hoping to open. Everyone in the education department seems to be very enthusiastic about the school, but because of many issues – not least the

strikes – we still have not got the necessary approval and signatures. I have started after-school learning support lessons in our school buildings to help get the school known before we open officially. Please continue to pray for this. It has been a long process of well over a year. I have stepped down from my work at Dumisani as from January so that I can concentrate on the school. I know that I am going to miss working at Dumisani and being part of the every-day functioning of the college. I will still lead the Sunday school teacher training work and the Bible Women training but won't be involved in the main teaching. The rest of the teaching staff will have to absorb my workload as well as their own.

Recently, we had our latest Sunday School Teachers' Training day. A couple of days before, our team had been talking about how we are always aware of Satan's attempts to attack and disrupt these days, and how each time we see God over ruling and claiming the victory. That Saturday was no exception. My blood pressure dropped suddenly and I ended up lying on the floor, workers were late arriving, the electricity kept going off and supplies that we needed disappeared. As usual, we got into a circle and prayed. God's presence was very real as we prayed, and the day went on without any more hitches or upsets. We had many people with us who had travelled between three and four hours journey in different directions to attend. The desire and fervour of these teachers was humbling. Their hunger for teaching, ideas and strategies was overwhelming.

Our theme this time was nurturing and growing young disciples. The teaching and discussions around this topic brought out some very interesting points as well as some big problems which the church has to deal with. There were a couple of Sunday School teachers with us from the church where the 25 young people gave their hearts to the Lord back in July. What an exciting challenge they have.

A further 18 teachers signed up for the Sunday School Teacher's correspondence course. We now have about 50 teachers working through this 11 module course. It is so exciting seeing the ways in which God is working here.

A few weeks ago, our architect presented plans for a new Dumisani building. The plans look beautiful – simple yet stylish, fulfilling our requirements and working out some good solutions to some of our space problems. We hope to be able to share more news about this proposed development in coming months.

We are so conscious of the way that God is working through Dumisani, that we are confident that the Lord will provide the necessary finances. Please pray with us that all obstacles will be overcome and we will have a new building which fulfils the needs of our growing college.

I recently met a man who had decided to go to another university because it looked more professional than Dumisani. He told me that he had made a mistake, but many people now want to study in a place which looks more professional and has more appropriate facilities.

Recently one of our students was attacked. Her attacker was trying to rob and rape her. She managed to fight him off but was hurt. About a week later she had come into college and was obviously very ill. Shelley took her for medical attention and the doctor said that she had sustained internal injuries during the attack. As she was taken off to the hospital, her class and I joined in prayer for her. One of the

students gave thanks for being part of a college where they were not just fellow students but a strong and loving Christian family .

Thank you for your ongoing prayers and support. We appreciate it and especially at times like this, we rely so much on God's protection and wisdom.

#### Prayer points

- Pray for finances both personal and college.
- Pray for rain which we urgently need.
- Pray for Bethany's health which is still a cause for concern.
- Pray for Rachel as she concentrates on her final exams amidst the chaos of strikes.
- Pray for the plans for the proposed Teleios Christian School.
- Give thanks that Stephen has been given a place at Dale College for next year.
- Give thanks for a good group of students who have bonded into strong Christian family.
- Pray for safety for our students, who often have to walk through dangerous areas.

Love to you all

Alistair, Jenny, Rachel, Bethany and Stephen Wilson