



SOLA 5 E-NEWSLETTER

an association of God-centered evangelicals in southern Africa

No 14

29 April 2008

Once again, a packed newsletter with news from two churches as well as an update received from Pieter Swanepoel – all for your prayerful consideration.

1. Lynnwood Baptist Church (Pretoria, South Africa; April '08)

The last 18 months have not been an easy time for LBC. Being without a full time pastor has brought challenges and difficulties, but on the positive side has also taught us to depend more fully on the Jehovah Jireh – The Lord our provider. It was good to have a special time of prayer at the end of last year and earlier this year to seek God's face for the future.

Pastoral Search

Our pastoral search has extended far and wide. Mark Raines from Holland Michigan (USA) arrived at the end of July 2007 to spend 6 months assisting with pastoral work. His preaching was very edifying and challenging. Just when we were wondering whether he would consider a call, he was called to his home church in Holland Michigan to be one of their pastors. Two local men have also been considered, but God has been pleased to place them in other local churches. More recently we have had Andre Bay ministering at the church. He trained at London Theological Seminary (LTS) 10 years ago.

Andre has been doing mission work in Russia, but the Russian authorities have not extended his work permit/visa. As a result of this he has returned to SA as he is a South African and a member at Constantia Park Baptist Church. He is unsure as to where God would have him and his wife minister in the long term, but in the interim he is willing to do pastoral work among us for the month of May and perhaps longer. We are looking forward to his ministry and pray for God's leading in this matter.

Please pray that the church would not grow discouraged and remain faithful. Pray also that God would soon provide His man to fill the full time pastoral position.

Preaching Ministry

We are grateful for men who have filled out pulpit over the past number of months. God has fed us on his word and challenged us. We had a very good church conference in the Magaliesburg at the end of March. Doug van Meter spoke on Gender issues and the book of Haggai. These messages were well received in a time when there is so much gender confusion. The messages on Haggai were of particular encouragement to the church to remain steadfast in our commitment to build God's church.

We have also had 2 messages on the subject of the Lord's Day. These days with more and more secular activities (school, work, sport, etc) happening on Sundays our folk have felt the pressure and have needed some teaching on the matter. God's Word does address this subject and these messages have helped us to make God honouring decisions in our families.

Other ministries

We thank the Lord for opportunities to serve him in the Family Bible School (Sunday School), Tuesday Chapel ministry for domestic workers, Afrikaans Discipleship group, Women's Ministry, GAP (youth), book table, Yong Adults group and recording ministry. Please pray that our ministry leaders would know God's enabling and blessing on these ministries and that they would be effective in reaching the lost. We constantly face the pressure of busy lives which tends to sap our spiritual vitality. This needs to be guarded against and it is vital that we do not compromise our devotion to Christ and His church. The Power Camp committee has begun planning for the camp in August. This is a very important ministry to all Sola 5 young people and needs our prayer support.

Membership

We have had to remove one couple through church discipline which has been a very difficult and painful process. Please pray that this would have the desired effect of bringing them to repentance. We also have a number of regular adherents who have not yet taken up membership. Our desire is that they would see the need to commit themselves wholeheartedly to Christ and His church.

One of our younger men feels a call to study further and is considering the full time ministry. He has been accepted by LTS and is busy trying to make arrangements to go.

Church Plant

Recently we had one of the leaders of Central Baptist Church in Gaborone (our church planting work with Kabwata Baptist Church) with us. He asked for prayer as they are struggling to reach their community effectively. Having a small membership means the bulk of the ministries fall on a few members.

Thank you for your interest in and prayers for God's work at Lynnwood Baptist Church.

– *Richard Blackbeard*

2. Letter from Kraaifontein Baptist Church (Cape Town, South Africa)

Dear family in Christ Jesus

Psalm 36:5-9

Yes, we can truly say that the steadfast love of the LORD never ceases! We give thanks to the Lord for His faithfulness and sustaining grace through the challenges we have faced thus far this year, as well as for His abundant goodness to us in providing exciting prospects for the months ahead.

Let us begin with family news. Towards the end of February Abigail was hospitalized for a week with pneumonia as a result of allergies and asthma that were not properly controlled. While this was quite a traumatic and taxing time for us as a family, it provided opportunity for us to realize the love and support we are privileged to enjoy and experience through the church family. We were overwhelmed by Christian love put into action while Sam was in hospital most of the time with Abigail. The ladies did our washing, ironing, cooking and babysitting with much joy. Words can never express the great appreciation we feel to the Lord in moving His people to put genuine love into practice. Don't ever think even the smallest acts of kindness go unnoticed! We are also thankful that Abby's allergies and asthma have been relatively under control since then, as she has been placed on chronic medication and we now know the triggers for her allergies.

Abigail, Josiah and Zachariah are such a blessing to us and we are reminded each day how true Ps 127 is! We are also aware of how seriously we need the Lord's wisdom in shepherding their hearts and training them up in the way of the Lord. We pray that the Lord will graciously work in their hearts, as we know that salvation belongs to the Lord!

Sam is very excited, but also apprehensive about homeschooling the children. She knows it is a huge challenge, but one that she really feels called to do. We are trying to gather as many resources as possible and be in contact with as many homeschooling families as possible, which we believe will make the challenge more enjoyable and successful. We trust that the Lord will be gracious and bless Sam's endeavours with much fruit in the present and the future, and ultimately that it will all resound to the glory of our great God and King. If anyone has any advice or information that we could benefit from in this regard, please let us know!

The ministry

This year has started out with many challenges facing our church. A major challenge at the moment is that of leadership. We still do not have elders, and the workload and pressures of the ministry are ever increasing. Sometimes I feel on the verge of burnout, as I am sure many pastors can testify to at some point in their ministry.

The challenges that I face as a pastor are draining and all too often very discouraging, yet the Lord always proves faithful even when we are faithless. I know that the Lord will raise up godly men in His perfect time. I just need to plod on and keep my gaze on the Author and Perfecter of our faith.

And as one godly saint always reminded me of what Paul said:

1Co 15:58 Therefore, my beloved brothers, be steadfast, immovable, always abounding in the work of the Lord, knowing that in the Lord your labour is not in vain.

I am convinced of the need for a plurality of elders, and I so long for the day when a leadership of that nature is established, but I am also so aware that it is so easy out of expediency and desperation to appoint men in this role who have not been tested.

Act 14:23 And when they had appointed elders for them in every church, with prayer and fasting they committed them to the Lord in whom they had believed.

How easy it is to act hastily, and appoint men who are not really qualified to be elders. I pray for the grace of God to trust Him and lean on Him and not on my own wisdom:

Ps 37:5 Commit your way to the LORD; trust in him, and he will act.

We also have a group of men who meet every fortnight, to go through a Puritan Paper back, "The Glory of Christ" by John Owen. This has been a time of real, rich fellowship. And we thank God for the great blessing of being able to dig into such rich Biblical material.

As a church we have also decided to work through the 1689 Baptist Confession of faith. For many this is the first time they will be working through the confession. We have just begun this venture, and the blessing of being able to reaffirm such glorious rich truths, and to be reminded of such a rich heritage has been so encouraging.

On another note, this is my sabbatical year, and as a result of that we as a family are planning a trip to the United States. I have been sponsored by a group of men to attend the pastors conference at Trinity Baptist Church in Montville, New Jersey, from 18th - 23rd of October. I have also been invited to attend and speak at a missions conference in North Carolina at the Living Faith Baptist Church from the 7th to the 9th of November.

As a result of my sponsorship to the Trinity conference, we are trying to see if the whole family can make the trip. We will be based in Atlanta where my sister and her Jewish family reside.

Please pray with us that we will have enough finances to make our trip to USA possible. Thus far the Lord has provided funds to cover four tickets and we still need funds for another ticket and to cover the cost of our VISAS.

We were also informed that the U.S consulate are inclined to be very difficult, and if they turn us down the first time, we will be financially unable to apply a second time.

Should all things go as planned, please pray that we will be a faithful witness to my family in the States, as none of them are saved.

May our Lord continue to glorify His Precious Name through us and His church here in Kraaifontein as we seek to serve Him and honour Him with our lives.

Your fellow brother and workman in Christ,
Mark Powell

3. Feedback received from Pieter Swanepoel

24 April 2008

Dear brothers and sisters in Christ,

It is with gratefulness that I write this e-mail to update you with news about Dianne's headaches. She has been in SA since the beginning of April and have been to the headache clinic in Johannesburg. At first they made a plate for her pallet, which did not bring any relief. Dianne went into the Linksfield Clinic today for an operation. They made 8 cuts on her head where they cut and cauterized veins. It was a one day procedure and Dianne is back home with Tammy and Kerry. She says she does not have a headache as she did for the last year, but her head does hurt. This is understandable seeing that she has 8, 2-3cm cuts on her head. Please continue to pray that this would be the last of the headaches.

It has been a hectic month here in Nashik, being the chief cook and bottle washer, driver, teacher etc. It has also been the most difficult time being away from Dianne. I thank God that He has strengthened

us as "one flesh" in our marriage to the extent that we do not enjoy being separated. We are looking forward to have Dianne back with us on the 5th May.

We thank you for your prayers, love, care and support. Special thanks to all at Brackenhurst Baptist Church that has showered Dianne with their love and care. We thank God for being a part of His family that is so loving, gracious and merciful. Thank you to those who have assisted us financially. We truly serve a gracious God and we give Him all the glory, praise and honour, because he alone is worthy!!

May God have mercy upon you, bless and keep you and make His face to shine upon you.

His servants.

The Swanepoel family
Nashik, India

Romans 1:16-18

(16) For I am not ashamed of the gospel, for it is the power of God for salvation to everyone who believes, to the Jew first and also to the Greek.

(17) For in it the righteousness of God is revealed from faith for faith, as it is written, "The righteous shall live by faith."

(18) For the wrath of God is revealed from heaven against all ungodliness and unrighteousness of men, who by their unrighteousness suppress the truth.