



SOLA 5 E-NEWSLETTER

an association of God-centered evangelicals in southern Africa

No 33 11 November 2007

This week we circulate two prayer letters and a newsletter:

1. The regular prayer letter of Pieter Swanepoel, sent by Brackenhurst Baptist Church (BBC), Alberton SA as a missionary in India
2. Pieter included the prayer letter of Gareth Franks, also sent by BBC to India. We take the liberty of adding it to the E-newsletter.
3. The November newsletter of Jenni Meyer, Associate Sola 5 Member, full time involved in children's ministry at Petra College.

1. Prayer letter, Pieter Swanepoel

The Swanepoel Family

40 Viraj CHS LTD.
Siemens Colony
Wadala Pathardi Road
Nashik
422009
Maharashtra, India

Mobile: 00 919881167323 (Pieter)
00 919881167324 (Dianne)
Landline: 00 91 253 2378086
E-mail: pdswanepoel@gmail.com

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To God be all the glory!!

Dear Brothers and Sisters in Christ,

We thank our God and King for His love, grace and mercy in our lives as we endeavour to make disciples of Jesus Christ here in Nashik. The month of October has been a very difficult month, yet the grace of God has abounded in our lives. We look back at this past month and stand amazed at our God's care for us. Dianne and Kerry left for SA on the 28th September and Dianne returned on the 28th October together with Karin Burrows. In this we also want to thank God for Karin's willingness to come with Dianne, especially because Kerry-Anne stayed back in SA to study. Karin and her husband Dennis has been a great encouragement to us both whilst in SA and here in India and we give God all the praise for working in their hearts and giving them His love, grace and mercy. The fact that is here is helping Dianne especially as she don't have any other ladies in the house anymore.

Kerry-Anne completed her matric exams and although there were some subjects that she found difficult, she was happy with what she was able to do. Tammy and Kerry-Anne are settled in our townhouse in Brackenhurst and being looked after by at least 50 fathers and mothers from the church. Although it is difficult for us not having them with us, we know that they are in God's hands, cared for, and loved by all our church family. On the 4th November Kerry-Anne developed severe chest pains and was taken to the Mulbarton Clinic. She was diagnosed as having a pneumothorax, which is

an air bubble, formed on the outside of the lung between the lung and the heart and can be dangerous. Thanks to our family doctors, friends and brother and sister in Christ, Varughese and Sheba, she had the best care that anyone could want. The church family rallied around her and Tammy would not leave her on her own. I was told that some of the people had to be asked to leave because they were too noisy, giggling and laughing, but our girl was loved and cared for and for that we thank God. This was one of the hardest times for Dianne and I as we could not care for our daughter, but God gave us an extra measure of His grace and we survived as well. Kerry had a tube put into her side in order for the air to be drained out and the lung has completely inflated again. She is hoping to be discharged either today (9/11) or tomorrow. She is still in pain, but as the drain is removed, she should recover soon. Please continue to pray for Kerry as she has to be very careful over the next few weeks not to cause any further damage to her lung. There is a possibility of this recurring within the next year or two so please continue to bear her up in your prayers. Please also pray for Tammy as they are now living on their own in Brackenhurst.

I have before asked for prayer for pastor Suresh and for his ability and willingness to take the leadership in the church. Unfortunately this has not happened and problems have developed because of it. Suresh's unwillingness to deal with issues in the church that has to be dealt with biblically has caused problems and we are in the process of trying to correct these. As is the case in most situations like these, there must be a willingness to change and learn to stand on the truth of the Word of God. Together with this also comes the desire to fear God rather than man in order to lead the church of God to holy living. There has to be a teachable spirit and desire to present a church that is without spot, wrinkle or blemish at the coming of our Lord, Jesus Christ. Please pray for wisdom for both Suresh and I as we deal with these issues and endeavour to correct the problems. It is extremely difficult working in an atmosphere where there are problems that are not being dealt with biblically. I am dealing with the fact that culture, which is clearly against God's commands is being brought into the church and people not being willing to see the wrong of it. Rather than trusting in God and His Word people trust in the culture that has been handed down from their fathers and so the church is weakened. There is a danger of the Nashik Bible Church becoming just another nominal church as the people do not believe that they need to adhere to God's Word and following the example of the pastor. This is having an adverse effect on the church and there are those who are willing to change, but are having a problem with the fact that the pastor is not willing to take the lead in the church. Please pray for this situation to be resolved and God's name be glorified as a result of His Word being accepted and lived by all the people.

I will be starting a Systematic Theology course in January 2008 and am preparing the material for this. We are hoping to be able to use the SGTS course to train some men and to enable them to go and plant churches in the villages. There is a great need for solid Bible teaching for pastors as there are so many pastors out there who have had no training and are not preaching and teaching the whole counsel of God. Please pray that God would lead those to us whom He wants to do this work.

We have still not heard anything about our visa extensions. There is a possibility that we can start a business here in India and then we would not have any problems with our visas. We are looking to start a printing and publishing company. Printing costs in India are low and we can always print Christian books and material and send them to other countries. In order to do this, we will need between R50 000-00 and R100 000-00 to register this company and start operating. Please keep this in your prayers as we desire to be found in God's will and to be able to labour here in His vineyard without worrying about how long we would still be allowed to stay here. There is also a possibility that we can be the originators of a trust which can be used to register different churches in India in any area. We cannot be the trustees, but we can set the rules and regulations governing the trust and so ensure that whatever happens in the future, no one can change the reason for the trust. One of the biggest problems here in India regarding churches, registration, trusts and property is that there are court cases brought by people to steal the property from the churches. In doing it this way, we remove any possibility of this happening and remove that stumbling block from the church and its leaders.

Please continue to pray for this as both the Franks family, ourselves and whoever might come to India to minister will be benefited by it.

We are currently in the Diwali holidays and most people have gone back to their homes in other states. This is the festival of lights and fireworks, which means that for four days we do not get much sleep as the fireworks continue throughout day and night. We are looking to plant another church which will be a Marathi church. There is a man that is willing to interpret for me and so we will be able to minister to the local Marathi speaking people. This will be a slow process as most of the Marathi speaking people are Hindus or very nominal Christians, not knowing the true Word. Please pray for us as we endeavour to plant this church and so be used as God's instruments in furthering His kingdom here in Nashik. I am still discipling two groups of people and are seeing spiritual growth as they come to understand the truth of God's Word.

Thank you for your prayers, love, care and support whilst we are labouring here in Nashik. It is only by the grace of God that we are able to minister here and we give God all the praise. Glory and honour for every good work that is being done. May God have mercy upon you, bless, keep and make His face to shine upon you.

God bless.

His servants

The Swanepoel family.

Romans 1:16/17

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."

2. Prayer letter, Gareth Franks

The Franks Family

India, September - October 2007

"A man's heart deviseth his way: but the LORD directeth his steps." Proverbs 16:9

The last two months I have fully come to understand the implications of this Proverb. Our plans accomplish not what we intend, but what God sees to be best for us and His cause.

Many of you might remember me asking you to pray for Chandrakant and his wife Sheetal. Our plan was to bring the couple to South Africa and train them for the ministry in India. It was my hope that Chandrakant would become the pastor of the new church that we were trying to plant.

But as the Proverb says, A man's heart deviseth his way: but **the Lord directeth** his steps." Upon returning to India, and through a series of events, I came to learn that Chandrakant was not the man that God wanted to lead the church. Of course this left me very confused, and a little troubled. My pastors and some friends had been praying with me

about this, so I had to submit myself to the fact that God had answered our prayers in a very clear way. The Lord was directing our steps even though I could not see the future.

We continued with our church planting effort fully aware that in order for this church to prosper, it would need a godly local pastor to take over and lead the church in the future.

Our ties with the Kolhapur Church Council (KCC) have also been severed. Before leaving for South Africa, the leaders of this council made it very clear that they would not sponsor us to get a visa if we were going to start new churches. Despite the opposition we were convinced that it was God's Will and that the timing was right to start this bible believing church.

This left us with another problem, and with another obstacle that we could not understand or solve in our own understanding. Without a sponsor letter to

India, it is almost impossible to get a visa to work, let alone minister in India.

SFI Medicare Enterprises Pvt Ltd.

The Lord in His faithfulness directed us to a NGO in Kolhapur that was very willing to help us. This Christian NGO has just recently been registered as SFI Medicare Enterprises. They work with HIV/AIDS infected and affected people. Through correspondence they agreed to employ me and my wife so that we could get an employment visa. Our role in their company is to counsel their patients. They were very happy to allow us to use Nouthetic Counselling principles, which was another indicator from the Lord that He was directing our steps.

The president of SFI (who is a Korean missionary) understood our problem, and our mandate to plant a bible believing church. He agreed to allow us to use his counselling facility to share the gospel with unbelievers and to direct them into our new church.

This arrangement has proved amicable for us, as they only require nine hours from us a week. We have also been able to benefit their organisation, as we have already conducted a number of seminars to train others to become Biblical Councillors.

We have been amazed at the providential hand of God, and have been blessed to see his leading and directing through our ministry.

Kaushal Kale.

On the first of November Kaushal Kale joined Kolhapur Bible Church. Kaushal is a seminary graduate who was working as an assistant pastor in the largest church in Southern Maharashtra. Over the last 3 years, we have become friends and I have been able to disciple him and help him grow in his love for the Word of God. He had been struggling with some doctrinal differences in the church where he was working and would often attend our evening services with his wife Dianna.

To make a long story short, Kaushal could no longer bear the compromises he was called upon to make in this mainline church. Kaushal is excited to pastor Kolhapur Bible Church one day, God willing, and is eager to come along side me and help build the Kolhapur Bible church. He has also agreed to further his studies through correspondence, and learn sound reformed doctrine through the Sovereign Grace Theological Seminary.



Kaushal and his wife – never having the opportunity before - have also expressed their desire to be baptised after being convinced from the scriptures of the need for adult baptism by immersion.

“A man’s heart deviseth his way: but **the Lord directeth** his steps”.



Shaul Adbale.

Another praise that we can testify of this month is for this young man Shaul. Shaul had been one of my students at the Good Shepherd Bible College for the last three years. He came to faith in Christ during his first year at the bible college and graduated this August with zeal to serve the Lord.

Shaul proved himself as one of the best scholars, and was always searching the scriptures to answer people with the truth.

Shaul came from a Methodist background, and realised that his convictions about the doctrines of Grace would bring opposition from his own christian community and direct associations. He approached both Pieter Swanepoel and myself asking if he could be involved in our ministry in some way. Pieter and I prayed much about this and once again the Lord directed our steps.

Last month we took a survey trip to a village called Radhanagiri, about 60km outside of Kolhapur. This area has been known for persecuting missionaries and evangelists, and as a result has no church in the whole village of 10 000 people. The LORD visibly opened doors for his family to find a place to stay, a school for his children to attend and to find a few believers in the village, excited to help him with this church plant.

Please pray for Shaul, his wife Vishali, his son Solomon and daughter Shrusti who have left their families and friends to minister to this unreached people group. This Sunday, the 11th of November, Radhanagiri Bible Church will be having their first worship service. Please pray that the Lord would bless them and use them to reach the lost with the Gospel of Christ.

I feel it necessary to include an extract from last years September – October newsletter to show of His faithfulness. Last year I wrote;

“Praise the Lord for two students at the Good Shepherd Bible College who are showing wonderful promise. They shared their testimonies with me two weeks back and confessed that they received the Lord as their Saviour while I was teaching them about discipleship. Please pray for Shaul and Sushil who have expressed a desire to work with me to plant and pastor local churches. Please pray that we can train these men to be effective church planters and faithful pastors. This is their last year, please pray that the Lord will open doors and direct us as to where the Lord can best use them.”

Praise the lord for answered prayer, and thank you all who pray with us for the ministry in India, “A man’s heart deviseth his way: but **the Lord directeth** his steps”.

Keri’s Column

It is hard to believe we have been back in India for 3 months. As I reflect over this time it is actually hard to know where to begin...so much seems to have happened intertwined with the emotions of adjusting back to life here. There have been trials and blessings all so beautifully woven together in God’s perfect sovereignty.

Each week seemed to bring with it a new challenge and yet when we look back now we can see how the Lord was testing us during this time of overwhelming blessing.

As we were in the garden one morning to my horror, we discovered a snake!!!!!! This led to daily sightings of not just one kind of snake but three!!! Although one was not considered dangerous, the others were. One is known as the Common Crater (India’s most poisonous snake) and the other was a 2,5m Cobra...which I am sure you are familiar with from Discovery Channel☺. If this was not bad enough, at the same time we were having a problem with mice and cockroaches!!!!!!!!!! It got to one stage were I said to Gareth that I think the Lord was telling us to move...but Gareth didn’t seem to agree☺. Needless to say we had men in the garden “hunting for the snakes with big sticks” (as Ezra would say), poison strategically placed to kill the indoor bugs and much prayer to deal with my growing feeling of discontentment.

Even in the ministry, there have been so many trials that we have not had to face before. These last two months there just seemed to be so many hurting people around us. After one Sunday service at a fellow pastors’ church, where Gareth had preached, we were told that a man who Gareth had prayed with had committed suicide. Apparently he was in severe debt and saw no other solution other than death. At the counselling centre we were facing a

number of other trials. A pregnant HIV+ mother of three was getting ready to abort her unborn child. Her husband and her eldest child are HIV and their answer to this problem also seemed to be death...that of her 6 month old unborn baby.

Everywhere I looked there seemed to be trials and difficulties...this on top of once again leaving family and friends back in South Africa. Satan was quick to caste all types of doubts in my mind, didn’t God

love us? Why would He be allowing all of this to happen all at the same time?

One night as I pondered all these things and more in my heart, the Lord gentle brought His word to remembrance... *“For I am persuaded, that neither **death**, nor life, nor angels, nor **principalities**, nor powers, nor **things present**, nor **things to come**, Nor height, nor depth, nor any **other creature**, shall be able to separate us from the love of God, which is in Christ Jesus our Lord.”* (Romans 8:38,39). What a comfort this was to my heart!!! Just because we are at times surrounded by what seems overwhelming difficulties...God loves us and does all things for His glory.

Now as I look back I see how God’s hand was at work in all of this. Thankfully the “creature” problem seems to be over with none of us, thankfully, harmed. Gareth was able to minister to this grieving family in such a way that they are now more committed to Christ than ever before. And as for our mother in crisis, she has agreed not to terminate her pregnancy. With the Lords help we have found an adoption home for the baby. And most importantly we have seen God being glorified in all of these situations.

But the cherry on the cake for me has to be Kaushal and Diana. The couple Gareth mentioned in his letter who have left their church and joined KBC, have been such a blessing. For four years they have been trying to have a baby with no success. This has been such a heart ache for Diana, a woman who truly loves God. This has been something her and I have been praying about for some time now. On 1st of November they officially joined KBC. On the 7th of November they found out that Dianna is one month pregnant!!!!!!!!!!

What a faithful and loving God we serve...how could we ever doubt it☺?” *For we have not an high priest which cannot be touched with the feeling of our infirmities; but was in all points tempted like as we are, yet without sin. Let us therefore come boldly unto the throne of grace, that we may obtain mercy, and find grace to help in time of need.”* (Hebrews 4:15-16)

With much love,

Gareth, Keri, Ezra and Eden

3. Newsletter, Jenni Meyer

THE GRAPEVINE

Petra College
P.O. Box 260
De Doorns
6875
Western Cape

e-mail : jennimeyer@telkomsa.net
tel : (023) 356 3636
cell : 072 284 4564



November 2007 Newsletter

Dear Family and Friends

The last letter written was on my return from Malawi, the time has flown by with remarkable speed !

Have just returned from Petra White River, where the Mentorship and Management Course was held for three months for leaders in children's ministry in Africa. We had students from Chad, Sudan, Ethiopia, Kenya, Zimbabwe and South Africa.

So much was learnt with us all being together, for me one of the lessons was how the Zimbabweans are continuing on in their ministries, despite the difficult circumstances and shortages that come and go. The one pastor said that God is busy refining them and allowing the people to trust Him no matter what happens in the country, but there will be a time coming when God will bless His people once again and there will be much rejoicing and thanksgiving to the One who is always faithful ! The pastors from Chad and Sudan have also been experiencing much hardship, Chad with the persecution of Christians, the burning of their homes and churches and in Sudan the scars of the war that carried on for so long. Amule Elioba from Sudan showed pictures of bomb shelters (poles, mud and thatch), he said that even the dogs and the chickens knew to run to the shelters when they heard the planes overhead, hence his concern whilst he was at Petra to hear the rumblings of unrest again.

Amidst all the stories, some very sad and others good, the pastors and children's workers were able to testify time and again of God's goodness, protection and provision. Some participants had never left their countries before and saw God's guiding hand against all human odds. William, Hudson and Denis, three pastors who had had training in Foundations 2 at Mulanje Mountain, Malawi in May, were also able to be at Petra.

Different pastors and personnel were involved in taking devotions each morning for the three months. The courses covered were : team building, specialised ministry, how to manage a children's ministry, community and personal management, equipping adults, trainer of trainers, networking, writing a curriculum, mentorship and planning your ministry. The participants had to cook for one of the cultural evenings, where we were treated to the dishes of that country, traditional clothing, singing/dancing, and slide shows, it became the highlight of each week for us.

The participants went white water rafting on the Sabie River, camping in a game lodge and going to the Kruger Park. Many of the weekends were spent training in the Masoyi area, Mpumalanga, five groups covered different areas offering free Petra training to those who were already involved or who wanted to get involved in working with children. The follow up training will be done by Petra personnel, many of the churches have requested training, others saw the need to begin working with children in their churches where they have seen they were lacking, but also the need in their communities for Bible clubs to begin for the children and the youth.

Thank you for your prayers and keeping in contact with me, I appreciate that. I shall also continue praying for you, please make you needs known to me that I may pray effectively.

Love in Christ
Jenni