

no visit...driving...sand...training...black ground...numbers...pictures...

Hello wonderful people everywhere. I (Richard) thought that I should give my beautiful pregnant wife a break from doing a lot of the newsletter and contribute most for your reading pleasure (hopefully) in this edition of the Team Parker Times. I am sure Lindsey will edit the spelling, but keep on the look out.

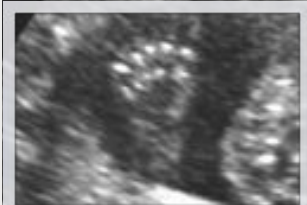
Lindsey and I recently celebrated our 5th Wedding Anniversary and also 8 years since I arrived in South Africa. We thank the Lord for all the wonderful years.

I am so excited to share all our news with you. You will need to read on to understand the title...

NO VISIT...We had mentioned in a previous email that we would be probably be coming back to Australia later this year. However, with Baby Parker due to arrive in November, we have decided to delay our visit to Australia until the second half of 2012.

This means that it will have been quite a long while since our last visit. You will see through this newsletter just how important your prayers and support are to us. You might wonder at times why God has put us in your heart at a certain time. Please know that it might be that exact moment when we really need your prayers and support. Thank you so much for all that you do for us.

Due to the fact that you will not see us again until the middle of next year, Lindsey and I will put together a short video explaining what we have been up to and our plans for the future. If you would like to receive this video to show at your church or small group please email us on richandlinz@vodamail.co.za.



Baby Parker: 12 weeks, 16 weeks and foot at 20 weeks!

driving...Peter Campbell and I left Johannesburg early on the morning of 7 May for our journey to Ondangwa, Namibia. After two full days of driving through Botswana and into Namibia, we reached Windhoek, Namibia. It was the most amazing trip, with great company and beautiful sights. It was wonderful to see this part of Africa, including the Kgalagadi Desert in Botswana. The Lord really protected us on the journey as we shared the road with plenty of donkeys, cows and horses. It was great to see wildlife roaming free and to see many special birds. The border crossings were quick and hassle free. We met Lindsey and Sabi in Windhoek. They flew in from Johannesburg. They joined us for the last day of driving from Windhoek up into the north of the country to Ondangwa, 60km from the border of Angola.

We could not believe our eyes as we got close to Ondangwa – white sand, and lots of it, replaced the rich soil of the south. And most of the area had just been in flood. We experienced quite a number of flooded roads. At one point, Peter lost his front number plate driving through a (rather large) puddle. We praise God that some local people found it and returned it to us later.

We had a very blessed training time with 35 pre-school teachers and men and women involved in Sunday School. It was wonderful to see the impact that our training had on this group. We were greatly blessed by the generosity of the people. They paid for our accommodation, food and some of the travel costs. They opened their hearts to us.

It was great to see the group grow together and to hear from them that they will continue to network with each other and meet regularly. The feedback we received was that the training was simple, practical and culturally relevant. We have already been invited back in May 2012 to do further children's ministry training and Farming God's Way training, amongst other things. We have recently heard that the training will be opened to churches in the whole of the Northern Region of Namibia - so it could be a much larger group.

Please pray for the group of Pre-School Teachers that will continue to meet together, and for a leader to come from that group. Please pray for those who would like to become Trainers in that area. Our vision is to train trainers, and in that way reach more people.

I praise the Lord that I stayed in good health during and after this trip. It was great to be back and involved in the work. The Lord eased Lindsey's nausea for the 3 days of training and she was really grateful for Sabi who assisted with much of the work. Peter shared great morning devotions each day that challenged everyone.

After the training we returned to South Africa. Lindsey and Sabi flew back from Windhoek and Peter and I took the scenic route.



Creche teachers showing off their visual aids made from throw-away materials, at a recent workshop.

As I type this, I am surrounded by black ground. On the afternoon of 20 July, a huge and hot grass fire engulfed our property. It jumped roads and fire breaks that we had burnt to protect our property and our neighbours. It was the worst fire I have seen in my 8 years here. The fire reached our food garden, almost reached our soon to be bible school (previously campsite), and came within 1m of our house. We praise the Lord that the fire brigade came and helped us put the fire out.

Please pray for our neighbour Jannie. He had a minor stroke after seeing all his winter feed for his cows being burnt and being overcome with smoke. We praise the Lord for the ambulance that came to help him.

We thank God that all the team were safe and that there was only minor damage to our property. Our house was full of smoke, but after a couple of days and many loads of washing it was back to normal.

It was a scary time and for a while we had thought our house was on fire. It was great relief to see that it was fine. Lindsey was well through the experience, keeping at a safe distance, and apart from lots of smoke and a burnt boot I was fine as well.

From the black ground we can already see green grass appearing. It is a reminder that out of bad situations, good things will come.



pictures...



...some of the beautiful puppets that the Sunday School and Pre-school teachers made at the Namibia training (from plastic cold drink bottles)



Lindsey and Peter handing out certificates at the end of the training



Richard doing fun drama exercises with the teachers

prayer points...

Please pray for Richard as he begins the process to apply for permanent residency in South Africa.

Please pray for both of us as we start preparing for the arrival of Baby Parker (24 November).

Pray for healing for Richard's headaches and for relief from nausea and fatigue for Lindsey.

Please pray for provision for the ministry and for our growing family.

Please pray for Thandi, who we have worked with for a number of years (the daughter of Mary who does the beautiful embroidery). Thandi has just started a Travel and Tourism Course and would like you to pray that she will be able to learn much and that this course will open doors for her.

Thandi helps us with cleaning on Saturdays to help pay for her transport to and from college.

We urgently need someone to handle the maintenance of the property, and someone to help with finances and admin. Peter Campbell is fulfilling both roles at the moment.

In the top compound, where we live, there are a number of units, including a park home, that we would like to move. Please pray for wisdom and the right people to help with moving them. We need to sort out the top compound for future development.

Please continue to pray for the Creche teacher training - Pray for Dominica and Thembi, our local facilitators in Vosloorus and Langaville. Also pray for the development of the libraries in these areas, and that a suitable venue for a library in Slovo Park will be found soon - a local business has agreed to help with the set-up costs -Praise the Lord!

All our love.

Richard, Lindsey and Baby Parker

Some interesting numbers from The Star newspaper, 27 July. These stats will shed more light on the current situation in SA:

Total Population: 50.59 Million with a third being under the age of 15. (40.21 million Black, 4.57 million White, 4.54 million Coloured and 1.27 million Indian/Asian)

Total Population of Gauteng (the province that we live in): 11.3 Million, 22.4% of the population of South Africa.

Unemployment is at 28% and climbing.

About one in ten people are living with HIV.

1.1 million adults and 377,00 children will need antiretroviral treatment this year.

About 258,000 people are expected to die of AIDS-related illnesses this year – 43.6% of the total number of deaths, and the lowest estimate of HIV-related deaths since 2001. One of the results of this is an expected 2 million AIDS orphans.

Please bear these statistics in mind as you pray for South Africa...