

As we approached this term, we did not know what was lying ahead, but the Lord did.

Firstly, our Principal, Cindy, moved to Johannesburg to be with her hubby, and we had to bid her farewell. She came alongside me during a time of great need in 2023 and stepped into an “unknown world” with grace and the Presence of the Holy Spirit, which was like a breath of fresh air to us. We are thankful for her contribution, investment and prayers constantly over the school.

It is a joy to introduce Estelle Marais, who is not a new face at the ministry. She has been working with me for almost 5 years and has been our deputy principal since 2022. It is a challenge as she stepped from a teacher (and deputy) into this position, but she is eager to learn, and we are continuing with our mission: To bring Jesus to our children—to touch lives and mend hearts. We said goodbye to teacher Ashley. She was an upright young teacher who taught us so much with so much grace. The Lord came through for us with a wonderful Godly teacher, Shantelle, whom I have known for many years, to take her place. She was one of our kids from the centres.

Our main calling is to give children hope that is only found in Jesus. We cannot give up or give in to the forces of darkness around us. “But we press on to take hold of that for which Christ Jesus took hold of us”.

The trip to the United States was successful beyond our expectations and totally revolutionized Philip and I. We are more committed than ever to press on with the vision from the Lord. I had the joy of being with my hubby, Philip, for three months as we travelled, worked and did things together. Everywhere we went and every church we visited was an uplifting and encouraging experience, with a message of pressing on. Several churches (new partners) have caught the vision, and we are determined to stand firm in the vision and calling upon the ministry.

The trip started with a fundraiser (Hoe Down) in Dunlap, Tennessee, at our friends Debbie and Gerald’s farm, *Serenity*. An amazing time and an amazing team of Friends who plugged in and made it a success. Thank you to Debbie, Gerald, Robbi, Pat, Ellen and Rick who work tirelessly to get things together. I got off the plane on Thursday, and the Hoedown was the next day. Three of our children drove from Pittsburgh and Butler to be with us and to attend the fundraiser. Thank you to the wonderful people in our lives who made it a success and to our



kids for their sacrifices.

Between the two of us we had online Teams Meetings with our team in South Africa. As a couple we crisscrossed the USA to get to all the places the Lord wanted us. In between we continuously worked on the home the Lord provided, which is doubling up as the headquarters for the ministry in the USA.

The churches we visited were:

Word of Life in Dunlap. Pastor Ed and Christie graciously welcomed us and are supporting the ministry.

Our first longish road trip was to Pittsburgh, where we visited CCOP and a couple of other churches where Merissa spoke during Easter. We were so proud of her. She made it a point of

introducing us and giving an insight into LIFE.

During this long road-trip, our car packed up and we literally prayed that it would make it to Pittsburgh. When we arrived

at the garage, the mechanic was flabbergasted as he could not believe we had travelled 14 hours with the car in that condition (and made it). The week before, we had it at a garage due to the “noise” we heard. All we could say was ‘Prayer did it’. We sold our car and purchase another, as we are dependent on having a vehicle in the USA.

Philip and I had the privilege of seeing most of our grandchildren. Only one family was not possible. It was a dream and joy to attend Arianna’s, our second youngest grandchild’s, high school Graduation Ceremony. She was so happy that we were there

as family to celebrate with her. As a couple, we have missed these occasions in our grandkids’ lives. We also met with our friends Pastor Dan Carver and Patti. Dan is on our USA board and has done a mission’s trip to LIFE.

Nampa Good News Church in Idaho welcomed us with open arms as they always

do. We shared in both Sunday morning services and showed the ministry video. Pastor Daniel and his wife, Liz, met with us during the week for dinner, where we could share more about what the Lord is doing. They made a contribution to LIFE.

The next stop was Shoreline, CA. What an amazing church under the leadership of George Hulse. They are a powerful witness, well organised, and strong in the Lord. We set up our product outside the church for three services, and the flow of people who came to talk with us after seeing our video was



mind-boggling. Our friends, Christina, Walter and precious daughter Sophia, opened their home and treated and spoiled us like we were royalty. The enthusiasm and joy, plus relaxed and easy to work with friends, made this a highlight for us.



Our next encounter was at Grace Place in Sioux Falls. We did not know when to go there or how to get there. It seemed impossible—but for GOD. He had an appointment for us. Philip and I sensed we needed to see how they develop their ministry and farm as the Total Development plan for Life in 2001 included a farm. When we spoke to the Pastor, Daniel, he immediately said that they will pay our tickets. We were reluctant to go the week before I had to return to the USA. But the LORD had other plans, and we are so thankful we listened.



Sioux Falls, South Dakota was a first for us and it is such a beautiful city. Their Sunday Church Service was 6 hours long, and it did not even bother us. The Holy



Spirit moved, and the ministry continued. When we asked Daniel, the pastor, how long we had to share, his reply was: "As long as you want or need." This has never happened, and we could share from the depths of our hearts. The church rallied around us, prayed and prophesied over us. We visited the farm and were part of what the Lord is doing in Sioux Falls.

We were so blessed when they put us up in a beautiful hotel because Daniel felt we needed the spoiling, a break and the blessings. Twice our plane was delayed and twice these precious congregation upgraded our hotel room. On the last night, Thursday evening, we were in the presidential suite. All this time, the team was ministering to us and encouraging us that the Lord gave us 'the vision', and we should keep carrying the vision till He decides. Daniel challenged us with the following:

1. Where does the Bible say to retire /step down
2. Why do we step down from the calling from the Lord?
3. Who got the mantle to run the ministry and to whom did he entrust the Vision to?
4. Where was the vision born? Whose hearts?

Right after night, the Lord challenged us with Words from the team. Events in the Bible such as Moses and Joshua, Elijah/ Elisha, Paul and Timothy, David and Solomon, Jesus and His disciples. They all persevered with a single vision till God decided their time was up. Meanwhile, they raised up those on whom the mantle will fall. What a God-ordained time with Daniel and Liz. They have impact-

ed us and the way forward for Life. It is significant that at both Nampa and Sioux Falls, the pastor couples were Daniel and Liz. We only got home Friday night and I flew out on Saturday and I made it.

Kimberly, our friend of many years and the accountant for LIFE in the USA, announced two weeks before my departure that she was coming to South Africa with me. What a wonderful surprise. She landed a couple of days before me because we were split up and delayed in Atlanta. I stayed in Atlanta for two days before I could fly out.

Kimberly landed two days before me. She recorded a daily story of her visits. I am going to use her journal to give a different perspective as to what the Lord is doing.



'Yesterday was the first day of the Holiday club. Very overwhelming. More than 250 kids between 6 and 18. Breakfast porridge was served as children arrived while handing out name tags, and wrist bands for grouping in their 6 centres. The early arrivals helped put out mats (a thin carpet sample) to sit on the ground and eat. They were so hungry. The children knew exactly how to help clean up and help with cleaning dishes. The California team and I saw it as a treat to wash the dishes in a plastic container with a little bit of warm water.



We proceeded to the Tent everyone gathered to sing, pray and worship God and learnt Bible Verses.

The 6 groups of children went to their 6 stations and switch every 1/2 hour. Art, games, Bible study, flag Worship, sports, and meals. Here is where you see the reality of the children's lives.



A personal moment when I realised

that this lovely lady Maryna truly is the face of Life. The entire town respects her and Life. She was having a slow leak with her tire, so we went to the tire shop. The workers know who she is and request no charge for her. They say they will do the labour and there was no cost to the store. This was a first for me. So we ran to get cash to tip all off them.



They live in a small gated community. Really the only way to be safe here. It is winter and this morning it was 43 degrees. Maryna didn't tell me till the day before that there is no central heat. I really wasn't expecting that. So I figured space heaters or something. Nope. Nothing. That costs too much electricity. Lots of concrete and tile. So your feet are cold. So I thought I'll take a nice long hot shower. Nope- water is an issue so no long showers. So you're cold when you wake up, you're cold when

you go to bed. I can't even imagine what it's like for the kids where they live.

Day 2: My takeaway today - the staff. Every single staff member these people who have nothing and working for so little ALL say "it's a pleasure and it's not a job. We love it". Such special people.

I found it interesting that their pictures make everything look so happy and bright. The staff want the kids to be happy and feel the love of the Lord because there is not much joy when they leave. Some kids are not even capable of smiling, due to the pain they have and are experiencing. You can feel their pain.... These happy blessed times at LIFE are their only life-line. Then there is Neville. He is probably one of the

most special men I have ever met. He has his hand on everywhere. He is there to help with whatever needs done. He is genuine, has Maryna's back, has a love for

the Lord, and loves these kids. He knows the importance of a male figure in the kids lives. He sees the impact of the fatherless. He has a wife and kids, yet he still meets with boys and has a men's Bible study. He models and speaks on how to be good dads and good husbands. I have no idea how he fits it all in but Maryna and I am praying for more men like him to join LIFE Community Services.

Shoreline church in California was an amazing team that came to help Life this week and they welcomed me like I was one of them. What an honor to get to know them. Between the LIFE staff and Shoreline, what an effort they put in. Another young man that total impressed me with his compassion and passion for his job is Jamie, Philip and Maryna's adopted son. There was a young girl in his centre who would often not eat at all. How did Jamie handle it? Sat with her and figured out that she is afraid to walk home alone. He talked with a group of boys and kept them occupied with helping him so they won't leave without her. The kids are part of his being. Having Godly men role-models is so important. Jamie knows it, he had the opportunity to be a kid at LIFE, and now he's passing it forward.

One of the missionaries shared how last year he wasn't really sure where he was with God but visiting Life last year brought him to know God in a personal way and the kids and Life revealed that.. Now coming back has touched him in a whole new way. Just one more time I was in tears just as he was. (His story to share in the next Newsletter) All I can say is: yes, this place, the kids and the people absolutely bring you closer to God in a very profound way.'

Our group from The Shoreline Church of San Clemente just returned last week from serv-

ing the incredible community of Life Community Service. This organization has built an outreach to the community of George that delivers the Word of God in so many ways. We were all so blessed to be able to serve alongside the staff of LCS. One of my favorite memories is the staff and children singing over us on our last day. Looking out at +- 300 children and staff with their arms reaching out, and singing praises to the Lord brought our group to tears, knowing that they can give so much when in many cases, they have so little. We were there to minister to them, and they ended up ministering to us in ways that we will not soon forget. It is a gift that is everlasting! "And His name will be the hope of all the world" Matthew 12:21



Thank you Shoreline and Kimberly

**A Donor who ran a marathon on our behalf: Adam Lewis - THANK YOU FROM LIFE**

'Good morning Maryna. Thank you for your email.

It was a very humbling experience on that day we visited you with Angus. What you are trying to achieve is something that has to be admired. I do have to admit that running the marathon was quite a challenge but was made easier with the fact that I was running for such a fantastic charity and knowing that it would make a real difference to children's lives.

A four hour run is a small price to pay to make lasting impact on a life.

It was my pleasure to raise some funds for you and I thank you for your acknowledgment.'



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