

PAGE ONE

Dear friends

I have my February diary open in front of me as I write to you. It is full of the ordinary rhythm of parish ministry: 4 weddings, 18 church services between BPC and the Nyanga Congregation I attempt to care for, 2 Session Meetings with the Elders, 1 for the Presbytery and 1 Presbytery Finance Committee of which I am Convenor.

Also are the Tuesday morning prayers for you: Tony and I first meet with the Pastoral Team, Secretary and Caretaker and then go off into one of our offices for another time of more detailed prayers for you.

I have my home group each Thursday night and Confirmation preparation each Sunday at 5 30pm. And I see I have to make a speech to a group of retired folk in the Congregational Church in Kuils River and one to our 2 Women's groups that are joining together as one group (Well done Ladies!).

The diary also has a couple of social engagements inked in (a 50th birthday bash, dinner with friends in and outside of BPC).

And in addition to the regular work (not put in the diary but it gets done) Pastoral visits, hospital visits, sermon and worship preparation, personal study and reading and praying) are 3 exotic entries.

a) My eldest daughter, Hannah, gets married on the 11th of February. I will take a few days leave before the Saturday and on the Sunday after.

* You are all invited to a tea at BPC after each service on 19th February. The Wedding is up at Riebeeck Kasteel: too far to drag everyone

there but we want to Thank You for all you've put into our lives that we've put into Hannah. So, tea and a nibble on 19th February - put in your diary, please.

- b) I will probably go to Zimbabwe for 2 days at the end of the month as part of my getting ready to be Moderator of our Church in July. I am completely out of touch as to how our churches and schools (we run 7 high schools) are faring. I do know we are short of ministers and that Mugabe's thugs do intimidate Christians.
- c) My regular donation of blood happens during the month. I really enjoy donating blood. Do you donate? If not, why not? It is easy and you can do so at the Methodist Church Hall on the last Monday of every month from 3 00pm to 7 00pm. Save a life - bleed a little.

There's not one entry in my diary for a funeral. I pray it stays that way!

Now I hope you will use this very ordinary look into our very ordinary days to do a very ordinary thing for me and Tony:

Will you please remember to pray for us every day?

Could I suggest that whenever you say grace, perhaps at your family evening meal, you'd stop for a moment and ask the Lord Jesus to bless, lead, protect and fill your ministers with the wisdom that only comes from the Holy Spirit. Pray for us to be skilful in counsel and in preaching God's Word. Pray that we'd be joyful and that the joy of the Lord would be our strength; and pray that we'd be humble before God and you, ready to ask for forgiveness

and ready to be taught by you and others.

Ps 78:72 says King David looked after the nation of Israel like this: “David shepherded them with integrity of heart; with skilful hands he led them”.

Please pray that we'd be like that every day and in all the ordinary aspects of parish ministry.

When David is very close to death (see 2 Samuel 23) he says the Holy Spirit spoke to him about what a good leader of God's people is like.

2 Sam 23:4 “He is like the light of morning at sunrise on a cloudless morning, like the brightness after rain that brings grass from the earth”.

I want to be like that: Tony wants to be like that.

Please pray for us and hold us accountable.

Much love and thank you,
Rod.

IN THE FAMILY

CONGRATULATIONS TO THE FOLLOWING WHO CELEBRATE SPECIAL BIRTHDAYS IN FEBRUARY:

Mariska Fourie turns 30 on 17th
Helena Robinson turns 40 on the 1st
Cindy Lumsden turns 40 on the 3rd
Talitha du Plessis turns 50 on the 7th
Megan van Niekerk turns 50 on the 8th
Fred Simons turns 80 on the 23rd

Congratulations to the following BPC matrics who all passed with admission to degree studies:

Marijke Scheepers
Tammy van Zyl
Krishna van Schalkwyk
Jason Swart
Klumberley Leo (2 distinctions)
Matthew Swart (7 distinctions)
Jannes Strydom (8 distinctions)

Please continue to pray for these young people as they face new challenges in 2012.

BARNABAS CORNER

I would just like to thank my Presby family for all the well wishes, prayers, telephone calls and concerns during my recent illness.

It is so satisfying to know that when one is feeling very sorry for oneself, there are those out there who feel just as much for you and a feeling of contentment is obtained as and when the many requested blessings are bestowed upon you.

Thank you to John Skinner for the visit whilst I was in hospital and for the prayer. It would appear that John has a direct line because one feels quite blessed after he has prayed for you.

Then I would also like to thank the Lord for the angel who came in the form of a very rough and ready youngster who had seen tough times due to drugs and alcohol and who had now given himself to the Lord and who came and prayed with and for me when he was discharged. Lord just another reminder that your angels come in different shapes and sizes and are everywhere.

Praise be to God

Love

Stan Rowland

—oOo—

Many thanks to our Pastoral team for my love gift – what a lovely surprise , and it was chocolates !! Also a special Thank you to Erna for taking time to deliver the gift , and for spending her precious time with me. God Bless you all as you care for His people. Much Love and hugs. Jacqui

—oOo—

There aren't the words to tell you what the BPC means to me, except to say Thank You!

It makes my world a brighter place to be a member of BPC.

Thank You for all the Love and care through 2011

Much Love

Yvonne Kirschner

Jesus is thé Man!

Jesus is thé Man!
I say it 'cause I can
Jesus is the Man do you understand?

Jesus is the Man;
I say it "cause its true
It is about Him but it is about you
He's the Man for you!

Jesus is the Lord
And all His love is stored,
Stored up for you to this day:
All you gotta say
Is: "Jesus, You're OK,
You're the Man. I understand".

Jesus is thé God
The only living God
The God of Gods.

Don't be a clod
Don't plod, plod, plod:
Give Jesus the nod!
He's the Man.
He's mighty God.

Almighty but splendid and kind:
Hey, what's the matter with your mind?
Give Jesus the nod, He's the God.
He's the man-God.
He's the God-man, understand?

Malema's just a boy
With a mouth like a motortoy.
Gaddafi ain't no general
He's become ephemeral.
But Jesus is the Man!
God-Man and He stands
And stands; forever
Divinely clever
So don't you say "never" to the Man,
The God-Man.

Say "Yes" to the only one
Who's got salvation.
Jesus: He's the Man.
With Him you never say "Damn"
He's the Man, the living Man,
The Saving man,
The God Man.

Time to end.
Time you bend and
Get with the plan
From the Man
Jesus!

He's the way
That's how it's been
Always been
That's how it will stay
Always stay
Mighty God, He's the Way.

His name is Jesus!

IT HAPPENED IN A CONVENT

On Sunday 8 January, early morning service, there was a brief reference to Ancestral Worship.

Immediately two incidents came to mind. The first was at General Assembly, well before Union of the two denominations. There was quite a hefty debate on Ancestral Worship and I can recall quite a few of our brothers decked out in their ancestral garb to prove a point. Mandla Hlongwane, a Zulu, stands out in my mind in all his ancestral garb.

Many years later, in 1996, when I was General President of the Women's Association, besides presenting a paper on the Women's Association during prior and post apartheid years at a Conference in Auckland, New Zealand, I toured the North and South Island with the late Nontombe Majokweni, a WA delegate.

We stayed at a Convent, which seemed to be a place for priests. Nontombi and I shared a room and we were situated a very long way from the ablution block and toilets. We had to negotiate three passages in the form of a 'U' to reach these facilities. Nontombi in the dead of night had the need to go and returned to our room frightened out of her wits, because she had seen 'spirits' in the darkened passages. I managed to calm her and told her as Christians we do not believe in spirits. The following night I needed to make a comfort stop. I put on my long gown and away I went. As I came to the second passage I saw a strange coloured light shining from a room on my left of which the door was slightly ajar. I decided to take a look and pushed the door open. It was a Catholic chapel with subdued lighting which did cast strange shadows from certain fixtures on the walls and at 2am in the morning just glancing in could be quite eerie and intimidating. I had satisfied myself that it was nothing to be afraid of. As I negotiated the last passage something grabbed me from the back just above my knees. How I managed to suppress my screams I do not know, but I turned around to defend myself and found it was a huge cat. Obviously this cat plays games with the robed priests and mistook me for one of them because of my long gown.

A PRAYER FOR THE ANC AND RSA

08/01/2012: The 100th Anniversary of the ANC which held massive celebrations in Bloemfontein, including a multi-faith service, sacrifice of a bull and honouring of ancestors!

O God our Heavenly Father,

We know You love all people; we know You sent Your Son to pay for the sins of all people; we know You do not want anyone, not one person, to be lost; we know Your Spirit works in and through all people calling and turning us back to You;

And we know Jesus has the Name above all names;

that Jesus rightly has 1st place in all things (Col 1, Eph 4) and that He is the Head of all things and that all things find their proper place in Him and He alone holds all things together.

And so we come to You, living Holy God, Father, Son and Holy Spirit and plead for our nation.

We thank You for all who have worked, prayed and sacrificed to end apartheid, and bring dignity and honour and freedom to all the citizens and residents of our country.

We love this land and all its people.

We acknowledge all You, Holy Spirit, have done in and through all the people and agencies, and political bodies to bring RSA to be a place where You can be praised for Your miraculous work in saving us from civil war and universal disgrace.

But as Christian people, Holy Lord, we come today especially troubled. Forgive us if fear of other cultures clouds our judgement and causes us to offend You in praying wrongly.

Yet we plead, Merciful God, to forgive our national leaders if they have

bowed before other gods

and honoured other gods that are no gods but the ploy of Satan luring us and them from Jesus.

We do not think our national leaders have always honoured Your Lord in all the 102 years we have been a Union. We thank You for saving us from the sins of past leaders and national policies.

And so we ask You to save us again from leaders and policies

which offend You, and bring danger to all in this land.

We ask You to strengthen Your Church in RSA in every part:

let each Christian grow in the grace and knowledge of Christ
let each congregation love Christ and seek the fullness of
Your Spirit

let every minister and preacher love You, love Your people
and serve them diligently and love Your Word and preach it
fearlessly and with joy.

Holy God, let Your Apostles, Prophets, Evangelists and Pastor-
Teachers be heard again in all our land.

And bring to our President, the Cabinet, each Premier, each
Provincial Cabinet, to all Director Generals and Provincial
MECs and to all Members of Parliament, Provincial Govern-
ment and Local Councils

a Holy Fear

an awareness that You have given them the task to lead us as
a nation to where Your Commandments are honoured
and the ways of the Lord are loved as right and give joy to the
heart. (Ps 19:8).

Deliver us from the evil one Lord and conform us again in the
image of Your Son.

Come Holy Spirit, heal and restore and bless our land, its lead-
ers and people.

In Jesus' Name.

Amen

A VIEW FROM THE PEW

I attended the funeral of a cousin today. The two-hour drive to the small country town was pleasant. It was a perfect summer morning and I looked forward to seeing family members whom I have not had contact with since more years than I could remember. I felt good that I had taken the decision to attend a funeral on a Saturday morning, I mean; I have forfeited my regular Saturday morning breakfast at the foot of Simonsberg. It was all about me feeling good; not once did I think about the grief, which the family has gone through since he had passed away four days ago. Not once did I think about the suffering he had gone through since the dreaded disease was diagnosed in October. I even stopped to take photos of the beautiful vineyards of one specific estate, thinking that I should return in two years time to taste the wine, made from the vineyards that I was admiring. Halfway I stopped to have a cup of coffee, even bought a newspaper, something I have not done for many years. Man, I was enjoying myself. I was a tourist. Even paged through the paper in front of the imposing church building when I arrived fifteen minutes early. That is when the tourism stopped.

A friendly young man approached my open car window and introduced himself; his surname was the same as mine. I folded the newspaper and got out. 'Is Oom coming to my father's dankdiens?' "Well, yes", I replied feebly, immediately feeling guilty that I was reading useless news about the president's three-plane flight, while grieving people are standing fifteen metres away from me. "Welcome, come and say hello to the rest of our family", ma is expecting you", he said, after I introduced myself. What? I never told anybody I was attending, and I told him so. "Yes, but she said she was sure you would attend because my father often spoke about your childhood together", was his matter of fact answer.

He takes me to a side door where I meet the waiting family. They are all glad to see me. Of course, I knew that they had children but not that he was blessed with two sons and two

daughters. I notice immediately; no handkerchiefs and tissues. Instead, they are waving to the other people entering the church building through the main entrance.

The man with the black suit says softly and respectfully: “the family can go inside now”. One of the sons, with anticipation in his voice, says: “Let’s go people”, as if we are going into a movie house.

The many people inside the cool church have respectfully left a number of the front pews open for us. Maybe the man with the black suit told them to do it. The seats are upholstered and soft but the backs are too upright – BPC has better seats. The Minister with his neat white tie ignores, so it seems, the rest of the full pews and speaks intimately to Ina and the children for a long time, maybe five minutes. Then he asks those in the rest of the building to sing Lied 519 to the family.

Wees stil en weet; Ek is die Heer.

Ek spreek, en die wind en golwe bedaar,

Ek sal ook jou getrou bewaar

Wees stil en weet; Ek is die Heer

Ek ken jou pyn, jou donkerste nag.

Ek is by jou, Ek gee jou krag.

Wees stil en weet: Ek is die Heer.

Kom bring na My jou kommer en vrees.

Ek sal vir jou ‘n toevlug wees.

Wees stil en weet: Ek is die Heer

Bly waak en bid; volhard in geloof.

Ek is by jou soos Ek beloof.

I look at the family; they are smiling at one another.

The friendly man with the white tie reads from The Word and speaks to the family; he does not pay much attention to the rest of the pews, the family are the guests of honour, the very

important people this morning. He tells the wife that he has been jealous of her late husband's singing voice for years, how he had wished, through the years that he could play the piano with the same ease and quality as AJ. The family smiles, one of the daughters leans over to me and says: "Hy was goed, no two stories about that" Her voice dripping with admiration and pride.

We sing Halleluja Lied 181 verse 1, 2 & 3. The family around me out-sings the rest of the pews. I do not sing, I just listen. Then a ghost projector operator shows us some family photos. Mostly family get-togethers and I learn how the family has grown in the last thirty years. This is hard on the family and although I am enjoying it, I am silently wishing it would end. I do not want to see them crying, not now.

We are nearing the end of the dankdiens but I do not want it to end. I am discovering things about myself, which I did not know, and some I do not want to know. I make plans for the future; what I will do from now on but more importantly, about what I should not do. The Man with the White Tie tells the family that he has one more duty and that is to read what he was, five days ago, told to read, today:

Hier aan die einde van my lewenspad
Het die son vir my finaal gesak.
Maar moenie huil nie en treur oor my
O nee, wees bly: My siel is vry

Mis my 'n rukkie – maar nie vir lank
Met kop omhoog en geen hartseer klank.
Onthou hoe het ons liefde ons lewenspad gebaan
Mis my – maar laat my gaan

Hierdie pad moet ons elkeen stap
En alleen moet ons elk die tog aanpak
Dit alles is deel van God's Meesterplan

Op pad na waar die ewige die tydelike vervang

So wanneer julle eensaam en hartseer voel
Laat vriende se liefde en troos jou oorspoel
In goed doen aan ander kan g'n droefheid bly staan
Mis my – maar laat my gaan

The family leaves first – a sign of respect I suppose. I do not get up; I do not want this wonderful dankdiens to end. For an hour, God spoke to me, and I listened.

Everyone enjoys the tea and sandwiches but I have no time for it, I want to talk to my new family and after a while I get through the circle around Ina. “How can you and the children be so strong?” I blurt out.

“When AJ left us he gave his last steps here on earth but we know that he immediately gave his first steps in Heaven. That is what is carrying us”, was her simple answer.

Dear God, be with them as You have always been. Amen

Kobus MULDER