



Please pray for

The Simkus Family

"Save us, O Lord our God...to give thanks unto Thy holy name, and to triumph in Thy praise." Psalm 106:47

Dear Family and Friends,

Greetings from Bungeni, South Africa. Our family has been living here now for just over nine months (we arrived in Bungeni on August 6, 2009). Our Father has been so good to us. He has provided for every one of our needs. He has been our strength through so many times of utter weakness. He has been our faithful Guide when so often even the next step is a complete mystery. He has been our Rock and our Comfort when all else was in flux and all we could think about was "going home". He has been our joy when it seemed like there was nothing else to rejoice in. We give thanks unto His holy name for His tremendous faithfulness to us.

After nine months, what has been accomplished for the Lord here in Bungeni? Well, it certainly does not seem like much from our perspective, but we will leave this judgment in the hands of our omniscient Lord.

People: We have made a good number of acquaintances, as well as a few good friends here in Bungeni.

Tsonga: We have made progress in the language, but certainly not the kind of progress that we had initially hoped for—please continue to pray much for us along these lines.

Orphans: We have begun to establish several promising contacts with others that are working with orphans here in South Africa—please pray for the Lord's continued guidance.

In many ways, it feels like we are just beginning to get settled, just beginning to be able to minister in any meaningful way, just beginning to understand some of the most basic levels of the language, and just beginning to grasp some of the most foundational aspects of the culture. It is easy to get discouraged because, most of the time, forward progress seems so incredibly slow. Three things are certain: 1.) We have not arrived, 2.) We have a long way to go, and 3.) Our only hope is in the Lord—without Him we can do nothing.

ENCOURAGING BIBLE STUDIES

Since early December, we have been hosting Wednesday and Saturday evening Bible studies at our house. These Bible studies are in English and are usually attended by a handful of teens from our church—Mashamba Bible Baptist Church. While it obviously would be best to conduct these Bible studies in

the teenagers' mother tongue of Tsonga, we have not yet advanced far enough in the language to do this, and many of the younger generation speak English fairly well and understand it about the same (I believe that most of their schooling is in English). During our time on Wednesday evenings, we have been studying through the book of James. On Saturday evenings, I meet with the young men and we have been studying through the book *The Calvary Road* by Roy Hession. Perhaps our greatest joy related to ministry in these last five months has been to see a few of these teenagers growing strongly in their faith, becoming more sober-minded, and asking tremendously thoughtful questions concerning living the Christian life. Please pray for Kelly as, Lord willing, she will be starting a weekly young ladies Bible study this coming Saturday evening (May 15th).

A CUP OF COLD WATER

In April, our sending pastor, Todd Abbey, as well as another friend from our home church, Shane Brown, visited us here in South Africa. To say that we were excited to have visitors from our sending church would be a tremendous understatement. We so enjoyed our time with these dear men and words can't begin to describe how much they encouraged us. We were able to show them around Bungeni as well as take a trip with them to Kruger National Park. During their trip to this continent, they also visited the Brouwer family, missionaries to Tanzania (also sent out of Central Baptist Church). We thank the Lord for His goodness in allowing Pastor Abbey and Shane to come and we hope that by now they have at least partially recovered from their extensive African travels.



Wyatt, Joel, Shane, and Pastor Abbey

For His praise,

Joel, Kelly, and Wyatt

SENDING CHURCH: CENTRAL BAPTIST CHURCH, 100 Bobbie Avenue, Greeneville, TN 37743 • Pastor Todd Abbey

MISSION BOARD: OPEN DOOR BAPTIST MISSIONS, 1115 Pelham Rd., Greenville, SC 26915

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