



"Raised to Praise"

December 2004



*"Give thanks to the Lord, call on His name;
make known among the nations what He has done.
Sing to Him, sing praise to Him; tell of all His wonderful acts.
Glory in His holy name; let the hearts of those who seek the Lord rejoice."
Psalm 105:1-3*

We want to thank each of you who have faithfully prayed for Bethesda throughout the past year. Your gifts of support, love and prayers have brought us triumphantly through the year 2004. It has been our joy and privilege to partner and serve with you in this great ministry of helping to meet needs of those who have been affected by the appalling HIV/AIDS pandemic that is sweeping the country of South Africa. I would like to recount some of God's special blessings that took place throughout the year and then consider what God, through His grace and power, might allow us to do in the year 2005.

Families

God provided four South African couples who are committed to bring up children in the nurture and admonition of the Lord that they will become disciples of Christ. They gave of themselves to faithfully and sacrificially serve God at Bethesda Outreach Ministries throughout the year 2004. These couples maintain an upright testimony in the surrounding community as they teach and train the children and model godly Christian living to both the children and community.

- **Elias and Mamitjie Matjeni** continue to be blessed through Elias' role as pastor of their church. They have been encouraging a spirit of praise and thanksgiving among their congregation. As a couple who spent many Christmases without children, they are now thankful to have six children with whom to share the joy of Christ. We are thankful that the Matjeni's are committed to sharing the truth of God's Word with their children on a daily basis.
- **Jones and Lenah Phago**, who came to Bethesda with one child, are now faithfully caring for nine children. Even though Lenah says she is tired at the end of the day, she loves each of the children that God has placed into their home. Please be praying for Jones throughout 2005 as he begins seminary training at nearby Christ Seminary in addition to his responsibilities at Bethesda.

- **Fritz and Masello Shikwambane**, who also came to Bethesda with one child, enjoyed celebrating Christmas with seven children. They have been an excellent spiritual encouragement to the staff at Bethesda through their bold and consistent testimony. In this year, Fritz became our Houseparent Supervisor. He has been a blessing to our houseparents as he encourages them in their walk with the Lord and in their role as parents. Please be praying for Fritz throughout the year 2005 as he will also begin theological training at Christ Seminary in addition to his responsibilities at Bethesda.
- **Klaas and Martha Mashabela**, our newest couple at Bethesda, joined us with their two children in June. Klaas became our Childcare Administrator, and both he and Martha also began their role as houseparents as they received two more children in late June. Klaas and his family have added a special spark to our team at Bethesda and we are thankful that God led them to join us.

Construction

Throughout the first part of the year 2004 the construction site was busy with workers beginning Phase I, which included our first childcare unit and the school building. We were excited to be able to move two of our families and the school over to the new property at the completion of construction at the beginning of September.

Additionally, in July, the board members of Bethesda gave the approval to begin Phase II. The day after telling the contractor to proceed with Phase II, I was at the construction site and the foundations were already beginning to be dug! This phase included another childcare unit that has provided housing for two families and an assistant, the remodeling of an existing structure for a Team and Training Centre, an ablution block (bathroom facilities for the school), and a security office. It was a tremendous blessing to move two more families into their new house at the beginning of December and move our office into one of the classrooms. I can finally say that the village is all on one property and we praise the Lord for this.

Dedication

A milestone took place the 16th of October as many gathered from far and wide and from across the ocean for the Dedication Service. Those who gathered rejoiced with us and praised God for His faithfulness in all that has been accomplished at Bethesda Outreach Ministries. Nearly 400 people packed into our newly refurbished Team and Training Center. What a blessing it was to sing, "Great Is Thy Faithfulness" with others in that room who labored so

diligently, so faithfully, and gave sacrificially to see children come know the One who saved them from a life of devastation and hopelessness. We praise God for that special day designed to give Him praise. We wish all of you could have been with us to enjoy that day.

Education

The first year of Jabulane Christian School was a success. We are thankful to Kevin and Sarah Zakariasen who faithfully served as they started our school.

Please be praying as a new school year begins on January 12, 2005. Ruth Rising, our school administrator, along with two teachers are busy getting ready to begin the year with a traditional classroom setting and new curriculum. We are anticipating a great start to a new year of teaching and learning.

Community

God gave us many opportunities in the community throughout the year 2004. A local township church phoned Lois last January and asked her to teach a Bible study at their church. We praise God for the opportunity she has had in doing that.

In this land where there is so much death and dying taking place, there are many opportunities to minister. One of these ways is to counsel those who are grieving. This has been an added blessing to our ministry at Bethesda. There are families who struggle though the process of death and we are thankful that we can share the Word of God and make practical application to their lives.

I have had opportunity to minister and build relationships with the men at the local cemetery. Meshack, the supervisor of the men, has called me to officiate the burials for paupers. The last burial was at the beginning of December, and we buried 39 babies and 6 adults. I was thankful that I could share with these men the HOPE of the gospel; that we can have LIFE everlasting through Christ who paid the penalty for our sins.

Finances

God provided the finances needed to cover Phase I and II and He also supplied the daily operating expenses for the year 2004. We praise God for this. In an organization like Bethesda, there are houseparent salaries, teacher salaries, support staff salaries, food, clothing, utilities, and other expenses that must be paid. We depend on individuals, churches, businesses, and organizations to help provide for daily operational needs. Please be praying with us in the year 2005 that God will provide addition funds for new construction to house more

children who are now in needy and desperate situations; pray also that He will supply the continuing need of daily operational funds.

Even though it has been difficult for some of our missionary staff, God has provided for the financial needs despite the devaluation of the dollar and inflation. Please pray with us that God will allow some of our team to raise additional personal funds so they will not have to return to the States to take up that cause.

For all these reasons and more, we continue to thank God for His continued and abundant provisions. For each of you who have prayed for the ministry of Bethesda or given financially toward construction or the ongoing support of our families, we are sincerely grateful. Our prayer for each of you is that you will seek to glorify God in each day you are given, and be encouraged as you praise God for what He has done in the ministry of Bethesda Outreach Ministries.

Persevering, for His glory in the year 2005,

John Mixon for the Bethesda Team
