



# "Raised to Praise"

January 2003



Greetings and wishes for a Happy New Year from South Africa! I trust the year 2003 will be filled with wonderful opportunities for you to serve the King of Kings and Lord of Lords, inviting others to know Him in a personal way. I am anticipating a new year packed with blessings from God as we look for ways to serve our Savior and the people of South Africa.

The month of December was filled with activity regarding the land and rezoning issues. I want to update you in this letter to give you a clear understanding of some upcoming changes, and why these changes are important. Recently, I have attended many meetings about the rezoning of our land as, until this time, we have not seen much progress. For the last couple months I have questioned whether or not we are using our time and resources wisely as we wait for the rezoning process. My prayer has been that God would give me wisdom and clear direction as we seek to establish the village to house the orphans. It has been very difficult for the staff to see and hear about children in desperate need, and not be able to help because of limited housing on our current property.

On December 4<sup>th</sup>, I received a phone call at about 9 AM in regards to the municipal water we applied for to service our property. They told me that we would not be able to get municipal water to our property until the year 2005, at the earliest. In addition, this man went on to tell me that it would cost 1,200,000 rand (\$120,000) to connect to the municipal water (Magalies). I hung up the phone, feeling somewhat discouraged. At about 9:30 AM, I received another phone call from one of the local officials who has been very supportive in helping us to complete the rezoning process. She affirmed what I had learned from the previous phone call. Additionally, she said that it would be difficult for Magalies to designate water for any new property in this area until the year 2005. As we were ending the conversation, she invited me to the town meeting being held that evening, as a chance to interact with some of the local residents.

I attended the town meeting and was surprised to find out that Bethesda was one of the items on the evening's agenda. When Bethesda finally came up to be discussed, the first man rose to his feet to speak and assured us that he was not against the project. He believes the project is noble and just; however, he was opposed to the location of it. Many others spoke and reiterated what the first gentleman had said. At the end of the discussion I was asked if I wanted to speak. I hesitated for a moment, while praying silently for wisdom. I explained that we were not here to make enemies, but rather to come alongside them to help them with the problem they have of the many homeless orphans. In closing, I put out a plea that if they did not want us to build on the land we presently own, then perhaps they could help us find property where we could build the village. This greatly changed the tone of the meeting. By the end of the meeting, many of the people who had come to the meeting against us were now committed to helping us. Praise the Lord! I knew at the end of the day, without a doubt, that if we want to see Bethesda Village built for the orphan children of South Africa, we must concede and begin looking for different land.

This story does not end, it is just the beginning. The next day, I received several phone calls about the town meeting; and within 24 hours we had a new piece of land available for Bethesda to consider. In addition, a meeting was set up with Magalies water; and a letter stating support and a willingness to begin a petition proving support of the Bethesda project was obtained from those who were previously opposed to the project. What a blessing!!!

On December 5<sup>th</sup>, we had a meeting with the Department of Social Work. They had previously called this meeting stating they would like to make a proposal to Bethesda on how we can help them. In this meeting they talked to us about Kekana Gardens. Kekana Gardens is a squatter village that has a little less than a 2 kilometer radius (1.3 miles). In this area 20,000 people live in 2,000 houses. This area is located across the street from the new proposed piece of property for the Bethesda Village. They went on to say that they would like to fund two social workers to be trained by Bethesda, and then work for Bethesda with NO strings attached. Additionally, they would like us to help them to set up foster homes to help them care for the children of this area. We told them that our training for foster parents will be Biblically based and they agreed with that. God is so good!!

On December 17<sup>th</sup>, another large factor came to surface in a meeting with Magalies water department to discuss water for the proposed new land. The outcome of this meeting was verbal approval for water immediately. This is the same company that said we could not have water until 2005. The cost to run the water line on this new property is 600,000 rand (\$60,000), which is half of what it would cost to run municipal water to our current property.

Despite the many positive steps, we do have several obstacles to overcome. One obstacle is that this potential property we are looking into, like every other piece of property in this area, must be rezoned. The good news is that that will go quickly with the community's support and approval. The land owner has agreed to sell us this property pending rezoning. We met with the town planner on January 6<sup>th</sup>, and he is confident with local community support that it will go through. Please continue to pray that God will continue to give direction as we forge onward to build the village to house the orphan children of South Africa.

Please pray for the two South African couples God has brought to us to fill the vital role of houseparents. Pray that God will continue to equip them for the ministry He has called them to in training up followers of Christ. These two couples will officially begin the 1<sup>st</sup> of February, and you will hear more about them in the days ahead. Please continue to pray as we seek to hire social workers. Continue to pray that God gives me wisdom in hiring people for these key positions that will be godly examples for the children.

Thank you for praying for God's ministry. We are excited and anxious to see what God will do in this coming year at Bethesda, with the doors God has unlocked and opened. We trust you will have a prosperous new year, and that you will worship and enjoy our Savior as you seek to glorify Him.

John Mixon  
Bethesda Outreach Village Administrator

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