

Dear Friends

Another year is upon us – and I have not written a “scrapbook” in six months! I wanted to write when we returned from our third trip to Zimbabwe, but we had just 10 days to clear out our house in Nylstroom and make it available for renters. Although we had officially moved out of the house, we had left enough furniture, dishes and other junk we didn’t know what to do with behind so that we could live there in between trips to Zimbabwe or when our caretaker was taking his annual vacation or when we wanted to visit congregations in the area. After 2 years of nagging estate agents and even doing our own advertising, we gave up and rented the house out. The rent we get is very little, but what we save makes up for it: we no longer have to pay the electric bill (the basic rate is nearly \$100 before using *any* electricity – and we must have electricity to pump water), and of course, the caretaker’s salary. Not only did we have to clear out our belongings, we had to CLEAN the HOUSE – which had been sitting without a proper cleaning for over a year! You can imagine!



Then we had a week to travel back to Durban and get ready for our trip to the USA. I arrived in the USA pretty exhausted and promptly got sick! However, we both thoroughly enjoyed our time with friends and brethren, and we thank each and every family who were so hospitable to us – both accommodation and meals. I especially enjoyed the classes I taught. All of our daughters, including our

newest daughter, Kristen (Joseph’s wife), and our adopted niece, Maryandra Kendall-Ball Wiser came to the first class I taught in Tennessee. That particularly touched my heart.

Then Joseph and Kristen took us on a lightning tour of the NE United States. We drove up in a tropical storm and back in a hurricane – with lots of cool, overcast and rainy weather in between, but that didn’t really matter – it was the quality time spent with them that we enjoyed the most. It was also special to visit with Gene and Betty Tope. It is Gene who helped



Les learn to preach back in the late 60’s and early 70’s. Joseph still has his own business, (www.highaltitudescience.com) and they have recently moved to Tampa.

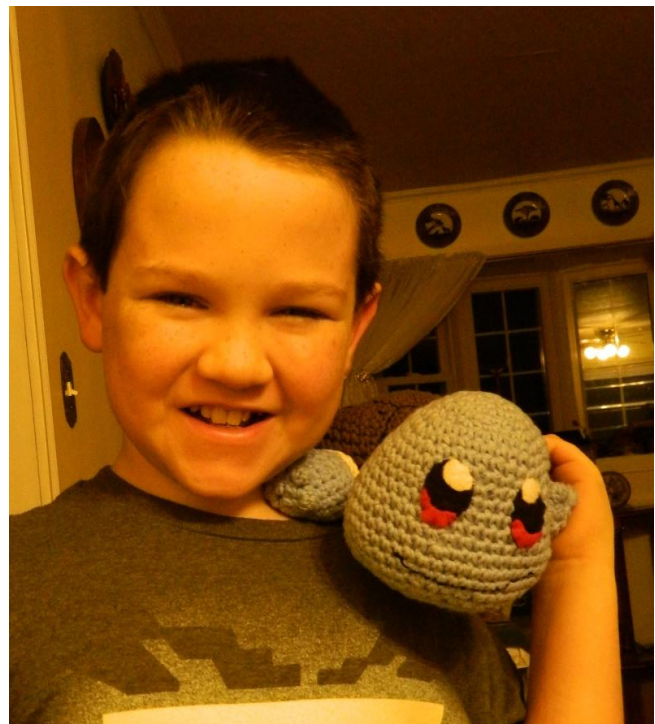


Then it was off to St Louis to see my 91-year-old mother. She has the normal challenges that elderly people face, but still walks mainly without a cane and lives independently in a retirement center.

Left: St.Louis at my father's grave. He passed away in 1978.

Below: Fun times – and lots of knitting and crocheting! -- in Knoxville, with Nathan and Abigail.

After St Louis we visited our three daughters and their families. Joy and Jared live in Knoxville where Jared works as an engineer, assisting his company in doing quotes on jobs and also working with sales.



Our eldest grandson Nathan, who had his first “double-digit” birthday when we were there, is great with math as befitting the son of an engineer, but also has an amazing ability to draw – which definitely is not inherited from me! Both Nathan and Abigail play the violin, but I think Nathan's love of expression is more in drawing and doing crafts. He even had me teach him to crochet –and he picked it up very quickly! While there, Joy arranged for me to teach my TN Bible class again, as did Gloria when we were in Birmingham.



Sam still preaches at Selfville, NE of Birmingham, AL, and also renovates and rents out/resells old houses and other odd jobs, with occasional help from Gloria and the three boys. If Sam and the boys aren't busy working or at school, they are busy playing whatever sport is in season. Rose is their only child still at home, but she is doing her best to catch up to her brothers, reading Dr Seuss and similar books. Sam and Gloria are great at thinking up fun things to do!



Jeremy and Melody are still in Temple Terrace. Jeremy works at Chase Bank doing something incomprehensible (to me) with computers. He also built an ice-cream parlor in one corner of their living room – beloved by the young people in the congregation and all their other visitors. Our youngest grandchild, Ellie (3) is still enjoying being at home with Melody. Indi (violin/piano) and Mela (cello/piano) seem to have the music genes – and that I do take some credit for! ☺ A highlight of Tampa was finally getting to go to one of Melody's concerts

(she plays for the Tampa Bay Symphony, a non-professional orchestra), and getting to go to one of Indi's rehearsals (she plays in the USF junior orchestra). Going to Indi's rehearsal was like revisiting our children's childhood, and even my own! ☺ A highlight for Les was getting back on the water!

Now we are back in Durban, and thankful for a few weeks to rest (I got sick again on the way home) and catch up on all the normal things of life (like cleaning, paying bills, fixing broken things, changing addresses & licence plates, etc) before all the various classes start up again in the new year. Thanks to Joseph and Kristen (who look amazing and were glowing with health), we decided to try the Whole30 diet (www.whole30.com) and have just completed our 30 days. Well, I only had 1 day of what they call "tiger blood" (super energy) on about day 28 and Les hasn't got there yet. They say that the older (and more decrepit) you are, the longer it takes to feel amazing – so, since Les LOVES the food on this diet, we are going to keep with it longer and see what happens. We certainly do need the energy, especially the mental energy, to keep up with everything! In the mean time we have noticed other positive benefits to the diet. I lost 7 lbs, my joint stiffness, and most of the dark circles around my eyes. Les finally got rid of the constant sties he has had for months and his essential tremor has improved. He is also able to spend long hours studying without getting tired and without eyestrain.

We are certainly thankful for every day of good health, every opportunity to serve the Lord, all our loving brethren AND every quiet, but rare, moment of rest. May God similarly bless you all in the year ahead. We appreciate your prayers more than you can imagine.

With love, Linda (and Les)