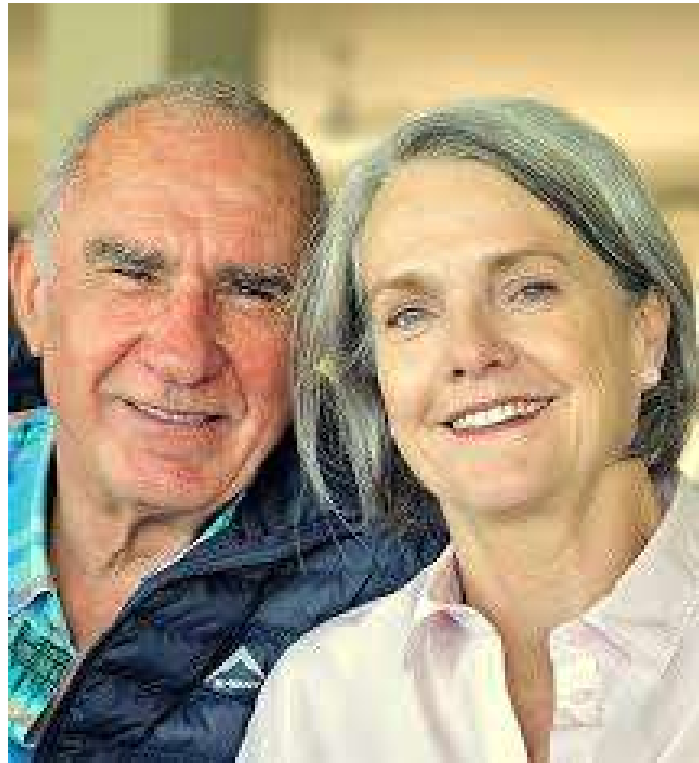


Koos Greeff



From KwaSizabantu to Klawer:

**Our journey from a cult
to freedom**

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Hello

This book aims to capture snapshots of my life in writing. My wife, Estelle, has been my travelling companion on this journey for many years. She is the love of my life, the mother of my five beautiful children, and the “Oma” of our twelve amazing grandchildren. However, this is more than a simple love story. This is a personal account of heartache, failure, doubt, and the discovery of grace, forgiveness, hope, and joy in the face of life's trials. The story begins in the oppressive confines of a religious cult and ends in a peaceful farming community on the border of Namaqualand.

Our journey can be divided into two parts, spanning approximately thirty-five years. The first half covers the seventeen years spent at Kwasizabantu Mission (1977-1994) before our family relocated to the 'De Brug' farm in the Klawer

district. This adventure took us through the sugarcane-covered plains of Stanger and Maphumulo, the dry Karoo region, the cool peaks of the Cedar Mountains, and the desolate plains of the Namib Desert. The journey's twists and turns can be best summarised by a verse from Proverbs:

"The path of the righteous is like the morning sun, shining ever brighter till the full light of day." (Proverbs 4:18)

Our life is like travelling a mountain road, rising from dark plains to peaks where the sun shines brightly. However, to reach the horizon at the mountaintop ahead, one must first navigate the climb along the way - often an arduous path.

I began drafting this book several years ago and finished it while camping at the Tsodillo Mountains in north-western Botswana in August 2012. It remained untouched for a decade before I decided to complete it.

The original manuscript was written in Afrikaans, and I enlisted the help of Daniel Schricker from Australia to complete the editing of the translated edition. I think he did an excellent job – but I will let you judge that for yourself. Thanks Dan! May God bless you.

Koos Greeff.

August 2024, Jacobsbaai.

1: Birth

The southern part of the Namib Desert is a dry and desolate place. Within this barren landscape, however, lies Namaqualand. Once a year, it transforms into a botanical wonderland after the short rainy season. It boasts an impressive 4,600 varieties of plants and is also home to the Olifants River, which originates in the mountains near the Cape Peninsula. This mountainous region also experiences high levels of rainfall. Despite this, the agriculture industry only flourished after the construction of two large dams starting in 1928. The project was a success, and the area soon became one of the most thriving farming regions in Sub-Saharan Africa.



Figure 1. Olifants River valley in Namaqualand

I was born on December 23, 1955, in the small, dusty, outback town of Vredendal. I was named after my grandfather, Jacobus Willem Adolf Greeff, who was born in the same district. For obvious reasons, my family decided to omit the 'Adolf' part when it came time to name me. My grandfather - who was mostly known as Kosie - was as a man with large hands and an even bigger heart. He was a successful mechanic who founded his own transportation and civil construction companies. I cherished my grandfather, and my passion for machinery was something I

definitely inherited from him. I was given the nickname Koos-
only my wife calls me Kosie.

Despite being named after him, I had more in common with the grandfather on my mother's side of the family. Nicolaus Everhardus Johannes Lauscher was a tall, lean man who, for many years, worked as a big game hunter in East Africa before moving to a farm near Paternoster. He loved to spend his free time poring over books in his study. He read everything from history to politics and seemed to be constantly writing to various politicians about matters that he felt were of immense importance.

By the time his children became adults, Grandpa Kosie had acquired a substantial amount of wealth. This enabled my father to attend Stellenbosch University to study chemistry with the aim of becoming a geologist. Unfortunately, he was unable to complete his degree as Grandpa Kosie had bought another farm and required him to work there instead. My mother arrived in Vredendal as a young schoolteacher, and it didn't take long before she had a long line of suitors hoping to court her. She fell pregnant and, after a shotgun wedding, I was born. Fifteen months later, my younger brother Nico joined the family as well. We had a happy childhood at the 'Begin' farm, and our family enjoyed stability as Papa's success continued to grow. He began by planting tomatoes before expanding his crops to include vineyards to produce raisins and wine. He eventually became known as one of the top farmers in the district. The inheritance from his father further boosted his financial assets. When I was thirteen years old, my parents adopted a little girl who they called Hilda-Marie- a name I always found very distinguished. She was nicknamed Nonnie and her friendly, bubbly personality meant that she quickly became the centre of our lives.

At the time, we were not part of what would have been considered mainstream Afrikaans society. For example, we rarely attended church. I was always puzzled when I heard school

friends discussing the most recent sermon they had attended. My parents loved to travel during the mid-year school break, and we usually spent our holidays in exotic locations. That was my introduction to Namibia (then known as South-West Africa), Angola, Botswana, Zimbabwe (formerly Rhodesia), Mozambique, and Malawi. We also visited various locations throughout South Africa. During the Christmas holidays, we typically stayed at our cottage on the West Coast.



Figure 2. Markus, me, my father Servaas, and grandpa Kosie. 1981.

Because I was not particularly coordinated when it came to sports, I developed a healthy fear of balls. Whether it was rugby, cricket, or tennis, I kept a respectful distance. I preferred reading and imagining all the places I would travel to when I was older. I was an average student at school, and never had to put in too much effort to do well. However, in my final year of high school, one of my father's relatives- a lecturer at the University of Stellenbosch- put me through a number of aptitude tests. I spent several hours completing the questions and tasks before being

summoned to his office. He stated that the results confirmed that I was academically gifted enough to pursue any field of study I wanted, but that it was apparent that I was lazy and did not apply myself. I was surprised by his assessment of my academic ability, but I knew that his description of my work ethic was not far off the mark. I had always lacked motivation to work to my full potential, especially when it came to subjects that do not capture my interest. I was self-aware enough to realize that I could not change my entire work ethic and live up to my potential before graduation. With my final exams just weeks away, I knew it would require a miracle. I decided to give God a chance. I prayed and asked Him to change my heart so that I could apply myself. I immediately noticed a new motivation and, for the first time in my life, I studied hard. When the final results were released, I performed so well that I had the option of attending any university of my choosing. Experiencing a direct answer to prayer also planted a seed of faith in my heart.



Figure 3. Student representative council in 1974. Me sitting front second from left.

The next challenge was choosing my field of study. It was 1974, and Angola, Mozambique, and Rhodesia were on the brink of succumbing to the 'communist' forces. At least, that was how the political upheaval was perceived at the time. White men in South Africa were still required to complete army training, and failure to do so could result in jail time. I decided to complete my military service the following year and use the time to figure out which direction to take with my studies.

Although I lacked coordination in ball sports, I excelled in swimming and running. I enjoyed outdoor activities like hiking and scuba diving, and I was unafraid of encountering the African wildlife during my explorations. During that time, I became interested in joining a parachute battalion and knew that I needed to be in top physical condition to achieve this goal. I set to work, spending countless hours training to ensure that I was fit and strong.

I joined the military in January 1975 and was assigned to an armoured division in Bloemfontein called the Special Service Battalion. The parachute battalion trained directly adjacent to our base, and I often watched them with envy. I was selected for the athletics team and represented our division in the 10,000-meter racewalking and cross-country running. Although I tried my best, I failed to convince the commanding officer of the SSB to let me join the parachute troops. They did not even allow me to contact them. At times, I felt frustrated and wanted to cry as my goal increasingly began to look like a pipe dream.

As part of our weekly itinerary, we were required to attend church on Sundays. One evening, we chose to visit the nearby Reformed Church. I attended the service out of obligation and was still dreaming of joining the parachute troops when the preacher approached the pulpit. He chose the third chapter of Second Timothy as his text, and I was immediately struck by his words as he read the second verse:

“People will become self-absorbed, greedy, arrogant, abusive, disrespectful to their parents, unappreciative, impure, lacking compassion, spreading false accusations, lacking discipline, violent, and uninterested in goodness. They will be deceitful, impulsive, and conceited, prioritising pleasure over devotion to God. They may appear to be religious, but they reject its true power.”

For the remainder of the sermon, I felt as though the preacher was speaking directly to me. It was there, on January 26th, 1975, that I became aware of my resentment towards the officers who had prevented my transfer and my pride that had caused me to look down on other soldiers in my division. Upon returning to the base, I took a solitary walk up nearby Naval Hill in Bloemfontein. There, high up on the hill, I gave my heart to the Lord Jesus Christ.

2: Calling

In the weeks following my conversion, I spent hours reading the pocket-sized New Testament that I had received during my induction into the army. One Sunday, a pastor dressed in military uniform made his way to the pulpit. He was a visiting speaker from the Chaplain's office in Pretoria and was on the base to recruit volunteers for a group known as the Canaries. The Canaries consisted of musicians, singers, and actors who travelled around South Africa with the goal of spreading a positive message. Some of the shows were arranged specifically for military personnel. Volunteers who joined would receive training at the Airforce Base in Voortrekkerhoogte before touring to different locations. The itinerary included various parts of South Africa and Namibia, including the war-torn region where the borders of Namibia, Angola and Zambia met. Although I had been relatively proficient on trumpet and guitar growing up, my main musical talent was singing. During my school years, I frequently

played the male lead in musical productions. After listening to the pastor from Pretoria speak, I decided to audition for the Canaries and was immediately accepted.

I was discharged from the Special Service Battalion a few days later and took a train to Pretoria. Upon arriving in the early hours of the morning, a driver from the Chaplain's office met me and took me to the Airforce Base in Voortrekkerhoogte. After being shown my accommodation and receiving my new uniform, the training began. We had to wake up early for morning exercises and then complete marching drills with our R1 semi-automatic rifles. This was followed by breakfast and a quick shower before the choir rehearsals. We practiced for hours each day and soon built up a substantial repertoire. The afternoons were reserved for the orchestra and drama groups to rehearse. I was not as skilled as many of the other instrumentalists but I had the chance to perform some solos with the choir.

After four months of intense rehearsal, we began our first tour. I relished the opportunity to travel all over South Africa, visiting large cities and small country towns alike. Our commanding officer was Chaplain Eric Harrington- a kind man who impacted my life in many ways. In addition to being a great preacher, he always treated us with compassion and respect.

One day stands out in my memory more than any other from that time. It was the 8th of September 1975, and we were scheduled to visit various military bases in Caprivi, near the border of Zambia and Angola. The plan was to travel by plane from Pretoria and our itinerary included Katima Mulilo, Mpacha, Omega, Buffalo, Rundu, Ondangua, Oshakati, and Grootfontein. It was a novelty to see these places as they were not typically visited by ordinary citizens, and we were all excited about the trip. While the rest of the group and I were waiting in line at the barbershop, a soldier approached us. I was instructed to report to the Chaplain's office immediately. Upon entering, I found the

chaplain seated behind his desk with a solemn expression. After some small talk, he delivered a startling piece of news: “Your father disappeared yesterday.”

I was stunned and stared at him blankly. “Are you from Vredendal, and is your local pastor a man by the name of Bernard Leuvennink?”

“Yes,” I responded.

He continued. “He called me a short time ago and informed me that your father disappeared yesterday and has not been seen or heard from since. You have been asked to fly to Cape Town immediately to be with your family.”

I hurriedly packed my belongings and changed into my best uniform before meeting my uncle at the entrance gate of the base. As I sat on the plane back to Cape Town, darkness and doubt seemed to envelop me. I was met by another uncle and we drove the 300 kilometres to Vredendal while speculating about what might have happened. Upon arriving at ‘Begin,’ my family provided more information. It appeared that my father had left without warning, taking only his chequebook. We later discovered that Angelique, the wife of his best friend, had also mysteriously disappeared. It soon became evident that they were having an affair and had eloped.

One of the more pressing practical difficulties created by my father’s absence was the upkeep of the vineyards. We required funds to cover the cost of fertilisers, insecticides, and the labourers’ wages. My father’s disappearance soon became public knowledge, and the story was featured in the Afrikaans Sunday newspaper. Luckily, the bank manager was aware of the situation and approved an overdraft on my account, allowing us to access the funds we needed. The local farming shops and the rest of the community were also sympathetic and supportive. However, the events proved to be too much for my mother, and she suffered a

nervous breakdown. The only viable course of action was to take her to a psychiatric facility in Cape Town for a few weeks while she recovered. Nico managed to complete his final exams despite the chaotic circumstances. Nonnie moved out and stayed with our uncle and his wife as she was only five years old at the time.

It was during this difficult period that I experienced the meaning of Christian charity and love firsthand. My chaplain from the Canaries frequently phoned to offer encouragement. We were also supported by Reverend Leuvennink. I clung to God throughout the event, and my faith grew during that time. A month passed before we finally heard from Papa. He called me from Durban, where he was staying with Angelique. My grandfather, two uncles, and I decided to travel to Citrusdal to meet him.

Papa had decided to initiate divorce proceedings, but he was concerned about saving the farm and providing financial support for my mother and sister. In January of the following year, my father relocated to the family farm, my brother Nico joined the army and I moved to Stellenbosch with our mother. My plan was to study for a BSc degree in Agriculture at Stellenbosch University.

During the Christmas period leading up to this, I experienced a personal crisis as I struggled to determine the direction my life should take. We were staying at our beach house in Strandfontein on the West Coast, and I found myself unable to sleep as I grappled with my thoughts and beliefs. Although I was determined to pursue a degree in agriculture, I felt conflicted as I believed that God was calling me to study theology. After reading the first three chapters of Ezekiel, I was convinced that this was my true calling. On my twentieth birthday, I surrendered my life's plans to Him.



Figure 4. Strandfontein. Here I received my calling.

3. The Beginning

It was at the start of 1976 that I received a 'call-up' letter from the army informing me that I was to report for further training in June. My hopes of attending university were dashed in an instant. I found employment at an agricultural research facility near Stellenbosch called 'Nietvoorbij' and worked there for about nine months. During that period, I became involved with a small prayer-group in Stellenbosch run by Charismatic Christians. It was an emotional and exciting time in which we baptised each other in the ocean, spoke in tongues, cast out demons, and marched around Stellenbosch claiming souls for Christ. We also sought to fight the evils of the town by praying for God's mercy and pleading for the blood of Christ to cover its inhabitants. By the end of this chaotic year, I decided to study theology but I had turned my back on the Reformed Church and was a full-blown Charismatic. Consequently, I decided to attend a small Bible School located in Constantia called 'Glenvar.'

1977 started with a bang and I was suddenly introduced to a real English lifestyle, including a strict dress code. One of the more amusing aspects of this was the fact that moustaches were allowed while beards were strictly prohibited. This became a source of endless discussion and, in some cases, bitter disagreement. Around February or March of that year, I had returned home for the weekend and was walking down the main street in Stellenbosch when I happened to see a poster outside the city hall. It read: "Dr. Kurt Koch says there is revival in South Africa. Come hear the missionary Erlo Stegen speak." I decided to attend the meeting and was very impressed by what I heard.

By May, I decided that the restrictions of the English lifestyle were too much for me and I quit my studies. Having some time on my hands, it seemed like a good opportunity to visit the mission station about which I had heard. The first part of the journey - Paarl to Pietermaritzburg - took me three days by train. Upon arrival, I walked along the main street until I reached the N2 intersection outside the city centre. A road sign confirmed that I was heading in the right direction, and I soon found transportation to Greytown. I had started walking towards Kranskop when a kind stranger offered me a ride. Kranskop was only 20 kilometres away from my final destination: Kwasizabantu Mission (KSB). Fortunately, I was able to secure another ride which took me all the way to the turn-off to the Mission. From there I took a dirt path between some Zulu huts and sugarcane fields, as it was only about a kilometre from the R74 to the entrance of the Mission.

I had made it about half way when a small Datsun pulled up beside me. I could see three young girls inside. The driver, Karin Withhöft, greeted me warmly and asked who I was and what I was looking for. Next to her sat a fair-haired girl with blue eyes who looked at me curiously. Despite not having received an invitation, I arrived at KSB around 4pm on May 4th, 1977. I had a full beard

and was wearing tattered running shoes and a pair of old, blue jeans. I was taken to see Erlo Stegen who offered me a place to sleep in the old hospital building in a space he used as his office. The next day, I was relocated to Trevor and Naomi Dahl's house. Due to the high number of visitors, Horst Witthoft and I shared their living room floor as a temporary sleeping arrangement.

Despite KSB's reputation for racial harmony, some divisions were still noticeable. During mealtimes, for example, the white and black people ate separately, with the former receiving food at Erlo's house. I was still feeling apprehensive when I joined the others for breakfast, and waited quietly as the food was being served. I was greeted by a friendly lady with beautiful blue eyes who introduced herself as Rita Stegen. I soon came to learn that she was the wife of Erlo's older brother. She asked if I wanted one or two fried eggs and mentioned that she preferred to be addressed as 'Aunty Rita' instead of 'Mrs. Stegen'. As eggs are a weakness of mine - fried, boiled, poached or in an omelette - that was all it took to win me over. I liked 'Tannie' Rita. A few days later I was moved into a single room close to the bathrooms and directly across from Uncle Gerhard Rudert. I stayed there for about six weeks and was overwhelmed by the kindness and hospitality shown to me. However, I was scheduled to do another stint of military duty at the Air Force Base on Langebaan in July, so when the time came, I hitchhiked back to Cape Town.

My mother was still living in Stellenbosch at the time, while my younger brother Nico was at Elsenburg Agricultural College. After completing my month at the military base, I helped Mom move back to Vredendal. I spent another month furnishing the house for her and then decided to return to the Mission. I still owned the Fiat I had purchased for 375 Rand, and thus began my long journey back to KSB. This time, I brought along my 12-string Ibanez guitar and my Olympus OM1 camera.

At that time, fuel restrictions were in place, and one could only refuel between 6am and 6pm. Additionally, the speed limit was restricted to 80 km per hour. As a result, it took me 23 hours to drive the 1,500 kilometres to KSB. The same journey would later take me only 12 hours once the restrictions were lifted. I stopped for the night in Kestell and parked my car in front of the beautiful Dutch Reformed Church. The next day, I arrived at KSB with my guitar and camera by my side. I had short hair, a droopy moustache, and was wearing faded blue jeans and running shoes. My blue Air Force coat was perhaps my most distinctive item of clothing. It had a large, embroidered sign on the back in bright, red letters on a white background that read: 'Turn or Burn'.



Figure 5. One of the first open-air meetings I attended at KSB. It was taken next to the house of Erlo Stegen. I am standing at the back in the middle with the blueish shirt on

During my visit to KSB, groups of Afrikaans-speaking students came regularly. The first busloads were primarily from Potchefstroom, before other groups arrived from Johannesburg and Pretoria. It was not unusual for a new bus to arrive every weekend. My stay at the Mission turned out to be a deeply introspective period during which I focused solely on spiritual

self-examination. This led me to write a total of sixty-three letters of apology to people I felt I had wronged to clear my conscience. During this visit, I also became more involved in the practical aspects of the work, which gave me a chance to become better acquainted with the co-workers at KSB. Every Friday, we would pitch a large tent between the old 'hospital' and the two-story building before dismantling it the following Monday. Some of my other regular tasks involved setting up chairs and tables and transporting food pots from the kitchen to the hospital. During this time, I could not help but notice Rita's daughter, Estelle, who had striking blue eyes and beautiful legs.

Although I was attracted to Estelle, I found her older sister Carmen to be more engaging when it came to conversation. Our personalities were more alike, as we were both extroverted. After the evening services, a group of us would sometimes stay behind and sing songs together while I played my guitar. At some point in November, the seams on my jersey came undone. As it was the only one, I owned, I asked Estelle for some wool to sew it back together. She offered to sew it up for me and I left it with her. Unfortunately, she seemed to forget about it, as I did not see the jersey again for months, even when the rainy season arrived and the weather turned colder. Those familiar with the Natal Midlands will know that one can experience four seasons in one day, even in summer. When the weather turned cold, I felt like I might die without my jersey to keep me warm. However, I decided against inquiring about its whereabouts. In August of that year, I took some time away from the Mission to seek solitude. I mentioned my desire for privacy to Uncle Erlo and he suggested that I use his brother's empty farmhouse. The following day, Boy Nkala and Mama Nsibande drove ahead of me to show me the way, while I followed them in my old Fiat. Mama Nsibande was one of three "prayer ladies" who were among the most revered members of the leadership at KSB. Given her importance within the KSB hierarchy, I was somewhat taken

aback that she personally accompanied me to the farm. The farmhouse was located in a valley near Kranskop and was surrounded by hills covered in lush trees. To the west, the plain was covered in sugarcane fields.



Figure 6. At the old cowshed in Maphumulo with Erlo Stegen addressing a group of visitors. 1977.

After sweeping the floor, I chose a room with a cozy fireplace and set up my mattress and sleeping bag. The house was simple, with an old-fashioned stove and an outdoor toilet. It also lacked the luxury of running water. I drove to the nearby town of Kranskop and picked up some candles, toilet paper, and various other necessities.

I stayed at the farmhouse for ten days, only returning to the Mission for the Sunday service. Mama Nsibande delivered food every couple of days, but we did not speak much during her brief visits as her English was limited and I spoke no Zulu. This time allowed me to reflect on painful memories from my past, including my parents' divorce, childhood rejection, and two instances of sexual abuse which I experienced as a boy.

Uncle Martin Stegen arrived one day and informed me that there would be a special series of meetings at Claridge, near

Pietermaritzburg. The Mission's leadership felt I should also be in attendance. *(In the past, Erlo had been a co-worker of Reverend Anton Engelbrecht who started the "Claridge Bible House" mission during the early 1950's near Pietermaritzburg. Apparently, Anton had fallen into some serious sin, causing Erlo to cut ties with the Claridge mission and start his own ministry.)* After returning to KSB, I changed into more formal attire and packed a small bag before driving to Claridge with Uncle Martin. The meetings were supervised by Youth With A Mission, (YWAM) and a respected team of preachers from overseas led the proceedings. The only Afrikaans representative present was Reverend Jacques Theron, who later became a professor at the University of South Africa. Joy Dawson, Derick Stone, Don Stephens, Floyd McClung, and Loren Cunningham were some of the people included in the panel. Although I did not know most of the attendees, many of them spoke German. To my surprise, people shared testimonies of spiritual abuse and heretical practices that had occurred under Anton Engelbrecht at Claridge. Another charge brought forward was the syncretistic nature of the doctrine at KSB. Allegedly, Hilda Dube, one of the Mamas at the Mission, had regularly gone into trances and spoken in tongues to provide spiritual guidance to the group. Once she snapped out of the trances, she had no recollection of what she had said or what had occurred.

The meetings lasted for three days during which various points of view were debated, and the YWAM leaders provided instruction and teaching. The outcome was a statement that was agreed upon and signed by numerous people including Erlo and Friedel Stegen - the elder brother of Erlo. Two of the Mamas also signed it, as well as Barney Mabaso. He was one of the most prominent Zulu preachers at KSB at the time. As a newcomer, I did not participate in the lively discussions. However, I kept a copy of the statement.

Point 4 of the document states:

That there is a general need for balance in principles and practices, which can be achieved through fellowship with other Christian groups and exchanging teachings of Biblical truths.

The commitment is to promote fellowship and exchange teachings with other groups in the Body of Christ.

Towards the end of the event, some people from the Mission appointed a board of trustees for Claridge in a private meeting. Bill Larkan, Friedel, his brother Bodo, and Hogard Joosten were nominated as representatives. The matters were resolved peacefully, and Erlo's humility in submitting himself to the YWAM leaders throughout the entire event was impressive. At one point, he even broke down in tears and expressed remorse for not promoting unity and for failing to guard KSB against theological error. I was impressed with his contrition and confession.



Figure 7. The Stegen brothers with their father.

Upon returning to the Mission, I immediately resumed my work and assisted wherever possible. One of my initial solo projects was repairing the numerous broken doors in the old hospital and

two-storey building. However, I was still preoccupied with the attractive girl who was in possession of my only jersey. At the time, Estelle was the only white woman who lived and worked at the Mission full time. Carmen worked at Maphumulo for Friedel, together with Carola Duvel. Other visitors present included Katrin Schlenker, a young woman from Germany, and a young Afrikaans-speaking man named Neville. Detlef Stegen and Kjell Olsen were already working there as full-time co-workers, as well as Arno Stegen, who was still in school. Most of the time, I paid little attention to other people and kept myself busy with hobbies like hiking and framing pictures. During one of my hikes, I discovered the beautiful waterfall at Jammerdal, which is located on Uncle Bodo farm. (*Uncle Bodo had donated part of his farm - known as 'Jammerdal'- to Erlo for him to be able to start the mission.*)

Carmen, Estelle, Kjell, and Detlef were all members of KSB's main choir. Estelle's duties also required her to work frequently with the Mamas and a younger Zulu prophetess named Lidia. Lidia played a vital role in the work at KSB. She also held a special significance within the group due to an alleged spiritual experience she had which became central to KSB's history. She claimed that after falling ill, she had passed away and had been resurrected from the dead after meeting Jesus in heaven. Now she was responsible for leading the choir and supervising the younger workers. Estelle was in charge of the meals for the three Mamas, and provided transportation as needed. Her closeness to these 'true prophetesses' made her seem even more special to me. I reasoned that only someone remarkably near to the heart of God would be in her position.

One night, I had a dream that I was walking in a dense forest with the co-workers from the Mission. As we walked up a hill, a landmine suddenly appeared on the path in front of us. I pointed it out to Uncle Erlo and the other co-workers, but they were unable to see it. The entire group came to a stop as I removed the

landmine and threw it over a cliff. This occurred three times before I woke up. The following morning, I spoke with Uncle Erlo and shared the dream with him. He calmly inquired if I had considered that this was the Lord's way of telling me to join the Mission as a full-time worker. He recommended that I pray about the possibility.



Figure 8. Estelle with her good friend Thoko Dube - the younger sister of Lidia.

By the start of December, I was certain that working full-time at KSB was the right path for me. However, I chose not to preach and instead offered to help with farming and other practical tasks as required. I communicated these plans to Erlo for his approval. I also explained to him that I strongly felt called by the Lord to work with the Afrikaans-speaking community and shared how God had previously called me into the ministry through a text in Ezekiel. I added that I was uncertain whether staying at KSB for the rest of my life was God's will for me and that I might be called elsewhere in future. He agreed to this arrangement, and it was officially announced at a meeting that I would become the first Afrikaans-speaking co-worker at KSB.

A few days later, I attended one of the evening services. There were only a few of us, and Estelle was at the back of the hall, translating into English. As I stared thoughtfully at her hands, a voice in my head said, 'Those are your wife's hands.' I was startled for several reasons: I was only 22 years old, had just recently joined the Mission, and had no income. And despite her good looks, I also did not feel much of a connection with this shy, girl. I still preferred her more outgoing sister, Carmen. I decided to seek counsel from Trevor Dahl regarding what I felt and asked him to pray for me.



Figure 9. Heino, Bodo, Manfred and Erlo at the back. Friedel alone on the donkey. The 5 Stegen brothers.

A few days later, while fixing the front door of the two-storey building, Estelle and some other workers approached. As the building contained the dining hall at the time, they were delivering pots of food. I looked up and moved my tools out of the way when I heard the same voice in my head again. "Do you see those legs? Those are your wife's legs." This time, I was convinced that I could not accept this as being from God. Surely the Holy One would not direct my attention to the legs of a pretty,

young lady. I immediately sought out Trevor Dahl again for prayer. I tearfully confessed my lustful thoughts and earnestly begged the Lord for forgiveness and deliverance. However, it was all in vain. For the next few weeks, there was no respite for me. The memory of what the voice had said would not leave me, and I was unable to sleep until the night of December 24th, 1977. Despite all my efforts - including fasting for days - I could not stop thinking about Estelle.

I decided to speak to Uncle Erlo about the conflict in my heart. Not because I felt I was in love or that I should marry her, but simply to find a resolution to my inner turmoil. On Christmas Day, I had the opportunity to share my struggle with him. To my surprise, he remained calm and inquired how he could help. I asked if he would speak to Estelle on my behalf and let her decide how to proceed. I trusted her spiritual guidance more than my own. I also knew I could not continue living like this. After speaking with Erlo, I felt a sense of relief, and the following weeks were peaceful. There was a steady stream of Afrikaans-speaking visitors, and I managed to keep busy. My mother, Nico, and Nonnie also came to visit, giving us an opportunity to spend some time together.

In early January, I had another vivid dream. *(It is worth clarifying at this point that although it may seem that I frequently had these kinds of dreams, these were unusual and not something I experienced later in life).* I saw the co-workers and the Stegens celebrating a festive occasion together, but Estelle was standing alone in a corner. As I wondered why she was standing there, a voice seemingly answered the question: 'Koos, don't you know that the Lord has set her aside for you?'

Upon waking up, I was confident that my interest in her would be reciprocated and that we would eventually marry. I was content to wait for as long as it took for that to happen. A few days later, I was summoned to Uncle Erlo's office where I found Estelle

waiting for me. I finally received official confirmation that she had accepted my proposal.

We got engaged on January 15th, 1978, and married a few months later on April 8th. This marked the beginning of my life with Estelle. It also marked a new chapter for me at KSB as my marriage introduced me to the inner workings of the Mission's leadership.

4. Engagement



In December 1977, Dr. Kurt Koch visited KSB. He was a theologian known for his expertise on revivals and the occult. He took a particular interest in KSB and was a frequent visitor. I wanted to contribute to his ministry, so I withdrew the little money I had in my account from the post office in Kranskop. I placed it in an envelope and gave it to him. It was 186 Rand in total, which was a significant amount for me at the time considering my financial situation.

A few days before my engagement to Estelle, we had to travel to Durban to purchase the ring. My future father-in-law cautiously asked me if I had any money. Despite having nothing, I confidently declared that I had it covered. Just before we were about to leave for Durban, Erlo's wife Kay arrived and handed me the envelope I had given to Dr. Koch. Apparently he had been hesitant to accept my donation as he believed I needed the money more than he did. Upon arriving in Durban, Estelle inquired about my budget for the ring, not wanting to select one that was beyond my means. In my youthful bravado, I informed her that she could choose any ring she desired as money was no object. Being the modest girl she was, she selected a small ring with two tiny diamonds. When I went to pay for the ring, I discovered that it cost 185 Rand, leaving me with only one Rand in my pocket.



Figure 10. Our engagement with Erlo between us. The KSB way.

We got engaged during the Sunday morning service on January 15, 1978. As was customary at KSB, Erlo stood between us to symbolise that we were not yet joined in marriage and placed the ring on Estelle's finger on my behalf. The sermon that followed was a diatribe about the evils of dating and courtship, which, according to Erlo, was rampant among Christians outside of KSB.

In the afternoon, the young adults gathered spontaneously to celebrate. In the excitement, I took Estelle's hand to admire the ring on her finger. I felt guilty about this and sought out Uncle Erlo later that night to confess my impulsive actions.

At dawn the next morning, I hit the road once more in my old Fiat. My destination was Paardefontein, the Stegen family farm where Uncle Manfred Stegen and his wife Evelyn lived with their five children. Uncle Manfred was the youngest of the five Stegen brothers. At that time, 'Gopapa' Carl and 'Gomama' Irmgard were still alive, residing under the same roof as Uncle Manfred and his family. The next two months were a memorable experience for me. Gopapa frequently allowed me to accompany him on his travels, often to Pietermaritzburg to purchase spare parts for the farming machinery used at Paardefontein. Other times we visited Greytown, where both of his older sisters lived. Once a week, we drove the white Datsun 1400 along the dirt road across 'White Hill' to Tongaat. We went to his beach house in Salt Rock, where I would mow the lawn for him. During our breaks, Gopapa would sit on the porch and offer me coffee and snacks while we chatted. Although he was not usually talkative, he took a liking to me and engaged in conversation freely. He often reminisced about the past, including the hardships of the Depression years, the persecution experienced by Germans in Natal during the Second World War, and the revival under Dr. Willie Marais in Greytown in the early 1950's. During my visit, I had the opportunity to hear more about the revival under Pastor Anton Engelbrecht and Erlo's work at KSB.

The highlight of my stay was spending time with Uncle Manfred. Despite his rebellious streak and love for tearing around the streets like a race car driver, he was a joy to be around. I even had the chance to experience his driving skills firsthand when we went to an auction in Ladysmith and were caught in a storm on our way back to Pietermaritzburg. Despite the pouring rain,

thunder, lightning, and gusty winds, he drove at breakneck speed. It proved to be a valuable lesson in how to drive in wet conditions, while also teaching me the meaning of praying without ceasing for the entirety of the trip. After spending two months with Uncle Manfred, I overcame my fear of driving on wet roads. Even Gopapa was not deterred by slick roads and stormy conditions. Their philosophy was to drive as fast as possible and arrive at your destination as quickly as you can.



Figure 11. The old farmhouse at Paardefontein with a new roof.

Paardefontein is mainly a forest farm, with a variety of trees stretching across the countryside. I enjoyed hiking alone and was able to explore the farm and surrounding areas to my heart's content. I also enjoyed seeing the horses that roamed the property. Occasionally, I would saddle up and find an isolated trail to explore. I usually rode alone, but occasionally Uncle Manfred would join me.

Through him, I came to know the unique Stegen family from Natal and learned about their history. The Stegens arrived in South Africa in 1884 as missionary farmers for the Hermannsburg Missionary Society. In 1978, they were considered wealthy, but

more importantly, they were rich in their service for God's kingdom. They supported each other whenever possible and were always willing to welcome anyone seeking assistance or refuge. Gopapa and Uncle Manfred stood out for their joyful dispositions, often cracking jokes, and inventing games to keep the grandchildren entertained. I am immensely grateful for the two months I spent at Paardefontein, and the memories of my time there remain precious to me.

5. Marriage

On my wedding day, I felt that I had married the perfect woman. I was captivated by her beauty, her talent for singing, and her prestigious role as the personal assistant to the Mamas. Being the niece of Erlo Stegen also placed her near the top of the Mission's hierarchy. She was a trophy wife in every sense of the word, and for the first time in my life, I felt proud and accomplished.

In English, the words "honey" and "moon" suggest something sweet and romantic, but the Afrikaans word, "wittebrood," translates to "white bread." Perhaps it is a reminder that at one time in South Africa's history, white bread was considered a luxury. Unlike today's youth, we didn't need fancy pastries or croissants to feel like we were being extravagant. Estelle and I exchanged vows in a ceremony at Claridge on April 8th, 1978. As the sun set over the Drakensberg mountains that evening, we drove to Durban to spend our first night at the Edenrock Hotel on the coast.

My father-in-law lent me his Mercedes 240 D while he drove my dilapidated Fiat back to the Mission. I walked into the hotel with my new wife, grinning from ear to ear. We had to check out the following morning after breakfast as we only had a reservation for one night.



Since I was not about to use the Mercedes for the longer trip to the Cape, I borrowed Uncle Manfred's small Datsun pick-up truck instead. I was excited to introduce my new wife to my family in Namaqualand. On Wednesday afternoon, we briefly stopped at the army base in Bloemfontein where my brother-in-law Arno was serving. The sun had set by the time we resumed our journey. We drove until we reached the desolate plains of the southern

Free State before deciding to stop for the night. By the time we arrived in Fauresmith, it was already dark. So dark, in fact, that we nearly collided with a train as the railway track ran right through the middle of the main road. We managed to find a hotel, but when we went inside, the front desk was unattended. After wandering around, we encountered a bartender who was playing cards alone and appeared to be intoxicated. He escorted us to a room with a single bed. The floorboards in our room creaked with every movement, as if they were complaining every time someone stepped on them.



Figure 12. The Edenrock Hotel, where we spent the first night of our honeymoon.

The bartender informed us that the hotel kitchen was already closed for the night, but kindly offered to prepare something for us to eat. He returned a short time later carrying a tray with white bread, fried eggs, a few slices of pink bologna, and a pot of tea. We could hear the trains passing by regularly and, after a sleepless night, we decided to leave early the following morning. We set off in the Datsun while it was still dark, heading towards our next honeymoon destination in Strandfontein on the West Coast.

My father owned a small cottage there and had kindly offered to let us use it. Our first task was tidying up the cottage. I cleaned the grills while Estelle scrubbed the floors. The cottage was named 'Cheers'- a reference to the toast made when having a beer with friends. This marked the beginning of the third leg of our honeymoon. Lobster was known as one of the local delicacies, and I decided to spoil my bride with this culinary treat. I went scuba-diving to catch them myself and bought some sun-dried fish in Papendorp as a side dish. My lobster hunt was successful, and I prepared them with a tomato and mayonnaise dipping sauce. However, due to our religious convictions, we refrained from consuming any alcohol and settled for Coke and Appeltizer.

I spent part of the evening sitting on the porch, listening to the sound of the waves. Upon returning inside, I found Estelle finishing the last bites of a huge lobster. Unfortunately, she later discovered that the food disagreed with her, causing her to spend the next three days running to the bathroom. She even fell asleep next to the toilet at one point. To this day, the sight of an Appeltizer makes her feel queasy. Despite this setback at the end of our honeymoon, we enjoyed our time of getting to know each other better. To this day, the song 'Railway Hotel' conjures up memories of our first nights together. While some may associate honeymoons with exotic locations like Mauritius or Paris, for us, the sound of a train takes us back to those early days together. Our marriage has stood the test of time, and we look forward to the next chapter of our lives together, whatever the future holds. Undoubtedly, there will be many more moments of joy, laughter, tears, and challenges to face together. However, whenever we reflect on the past, we thank the Lord for our 'white bread' honeymoon.



Figure 13. On our honeymoon. I was star-struck.

Towards the end of our journey home, we made one final stop for fuel in Durban, where I bought her an ice-cream. With the treat in hand, I climbed back into the little Datsun pickup truck and started kissing her - as one does as a newlywed. However, Estelle gave me a reality check by explaining that such public displays of physical affection would need to stop once we were back at KSB. She informed me that they were not tolerated at the Mission, even between married couples. I stared at her blankly, trying to process this. It was the start of a harsh awakening that brought me back to the reality of life at the Mission, pulling me out of my infatuated daze. It was also the first indication of serious problems in their belief system and misguided attempts to enforce them.

At that stage, KSB owned about thirty cows for milking and seven different breeds of bulls. I was put in charge of the herd - something I found difficult as I had no prior experience with cattle. The early years presented several challenges, including finding my own identity, determining my place within the Mission community, and securing a reliable source of income. As we received no salaries, we were entirely dependent on people's

charity. Estelle continued to sing in the main choir and serve as a personal assistant to the 'Mamas'. In addition to these challenges and responsibilities, Monika and Markus were born in the first two years of our marriage. Despite maintaining a chaste appearance around other people, we were bonded together physically and emotionally as our love for each other grew. We lived in one room and shared the public facilities with guests and coworkers, but we were just happy to be experiencing life together.

As I came to know Estelle better, there was one area which began to concern me. She would regularly experience significant emotional crises, sometimes as frequently as every month, with numerous factors contributing to her distress. Her inner turmoil often involved an overwhelming fear of God's judgment and doubts about His love for her. As someone who grew up in a godless family, I was familiar with the consequences of a worldly life of sin, but this type of spiritual distress was foreign to me. After my conversion, God's grace and forgiveness had been made very real to me and I had no difficulty accepting that He had made me His beloved child. I could relate to Luther's famous saying: 'Be a sinner and sin boldly but believe and rejoice in Christ and His forgiveness even more boldly.' In contrast, Estelle came from a God-fearing family that had travelled to Africa in 1884 to serve their heavenly Father and proclaim His truth. The Lord had worked powerfully in her uncle's life, leading to a revival that was transforming the entire region; at least that was what I was told. Additionally, she served as the personal assistant to the Mamas, the true prophetesses who were the driving force behind this great revival. Despite all of this, she was plagued by fears and doubts about God's love for her. This question troubled my young mind, and I felt ill-equipped to assist Estelle. As a relatively new believer, and having married at the tender age of 23, I was certainly no trained theologian. My work as a missionary farmer

meant that I spent more time learning about tractors and cattle than about God and theology.

And thus began my battle on behalf of the beautiful German I had married.



Figure 14. With my mother and father.

6: "Buster" the Great Dane

In 1978, my in-laws relocated from Maphumulo to KSB. Accompanying them was their Great Dane, Buster. He was a rather exuberant creature and liked to surprise people by approaching their cars and attempting to 'kiss' them through the window. Despite his size, he was not a noisy barker, only emitting the occasional growl that sounded like distant thunder. He was

also far too timid to fight, and mostly avoided the other dogs on the Mission. The one exception to this was my brother-in-law's Jack Russell - a short, stocky dog with a stumpy tail who was convinced he was the boss of everyone. If I recall correctly, his name was Rex, and he and Buster soon became soulmates. Early each morning, Rex would appear, looking for Buster. Together they would go on patrol, making sure there were no cats or mongooses trying to invade their territory. They would stop along the way if they came across some food, and then retired in the afternoons to sleep in the sun near the main kitchen and wait for someone to provide another snack. Once the daylight started to fade, they would return to their homes and recuperate so that they could go through the entire routine again the following day.



Figure 15. KSB in 1978.

At that time, KSB was not connected to the local electrical network. This meant that by 10pm the lights would go out and a wonderful stillness would settle over the Mission. Accompanied by the cool night air of the Natal Midlands, it made for a serene atmosphere. Estelle and I had put our two young children to bed one night when we were awoken by a terrible noise in the early

hours of the morning. My first thought was that the sounds were coming from someone who was demon-possessed. I quickly jumped out of bed and stumbled to the window, cautiously opening the curtain to see what the commotion was. The moon was bright, and I quickly scanned the area to find the source of the sounds. I realised they were coming from just below our window and wondered if someone was trying to break into our room. I carefully stuck my head through the window to investigate further and saw Buster and Rex having a serious argument. Perhaps it was about a female dog, rugby, or politics, but whatever it was, their disagreement was very heated indeed.

Rex was up on all fours, glaring at Buster while baring his teeth. He seemed to be trying to provoke him into a fight. Buster stood his ground, gazing down at his small challenger with a low growl emanating from deep within him. He seemed to be trying to warn Rex that he was tired of their argument and warning him that he would surely come off second-best if a fight ensued. I tried to intervene by shouting at the two dogs, but to no avail. Eventually Buster grew tired and decided he had had enough. He casually lifted his hind leg and sprayed Rex with urine, leaving him soaking wet. He then calmly walked away towards my in-laws' home, leaving Rex defeated and drenched.

Reflecting on this incident over the years, I realized that there was a valuable lesson to be learned from Buster: choose your battles wisely. If you make a bold statement, make you sure that you have the fortitude to stand your ground. Unfortunately, Rex was unable to do so. It is equally important to ignore the empty threats of a pip-squeak whose bark is worse than his bite. After all, why would a Great Dane demean himself by fighting with a tiny Jack Russel?

By the following morning, the conflict was forgotten. Buster and Rex were friends again, and it was business as usual as they trotted off to make sure their territory was safe once more.

7. Kranskop

When our daughter Monika was little, a meeting was held for KSB co-workers who had attended a series of services in Kranskop back in 1975. This was my first time hearing about the infamous 'Kranskop meetings' and I realised they held a special significance in KSB's history. My father-in-law, Friedel, owned property on the outskirts of Kranskop that included a large, old farmhouse where these services had been held.

Around the middle of 1975, Lindiwe Dube (*later Sibisi*) claimed to have a revelation in which the Lord commanded her to hold special services in Friedel's farmhouse. The narrative later presented at KSB was that an unusual work of God had taken place there. The Mission members present were said to have been inducted into a higher form of Christianity after undergoing a special process of spiritual purification.

In 1980, this group of 'enlightened' workers was called together. Initially, I paid little attention as I was hard at work making repairs on the dairy farm and was not required to attend the meeting. However, upon returning home that night, I found my wife in a state of deep distress. I discovered that they had been told that this particular group of believers was no longer meeting the high standards set since their experiences in Kranskop. To address this issue, they instituted a period of introspection, self-examination, and repentance. The impact on my wife was alarming, as she descended into a spiral of doubt, confusion, and anxiety for several days. Her mental health suffered so severely, that I feared for her life. She eventually managed to regain some psychological equilibrium, but the despair in her eyes persisted, and she was no longer the joyful person I had known before.

Considering the impact on my wife, it will come as no surprise that I did not share the leadership's utopian view of the Kranskop

meetings. When I heard people speak of God working there in 'wonderful' ways, everything inside me recoiled. I could not reconcile my view of God with what Estelle had experienced in 1975 and again in 1980. She suppressed many of the memories from that time due to the trauma, and even after 46 years of marriage, I still do not know the full extent of what occurred in that farmhouse. Even though she was old enough to be in her final year of high school, at the time she cannot recall those experiences in detail. She remembers the meetings lasting between 6 months and a year. At the start of the year, she was the deputy head-girl of the school in Stanger and one of the top students academically and athletically. After this allegedly 'special work of God' devastated her emotionally, her grades declined and she was forced to abandon her athletic endeavours.



Figure 16. KSB in 1978. Between Erlo's house and the workshop.

The entire Kranskop incident became a source of conflict in our marriage. Estelle believed it to be a genuine work of God, while I dismissed it as fraudulent and malevolent. It was only after nearly thirty years of marriage that we were able to reconcile our differing views on this experience. At first, discussing the matter with Estelle was difficult. She either refused to engage or had trouble expressing her thoughts clearly. Additionally, when I expressed negative opinions, she became defensive and accused me of lacking spiritual insight and maturity. For many years, the incident loomed over our marriage like a ghostly presence. I could

not help but wonder if it was the proverbial fox seeking to destroy the vineyard of joy in our relationship.

8. Military Involvement: The Beginning

In April 1981, I was called to the Louis Botha Air Force Base near Durban for a thirty-day military training camp. One of our duties was to pitch rows of tents for the twenty-year Republic celebrations in Durban at the end of May. We had to wake up early each day to drag the heavy tents to the designated area where we erected them side by side. Luckily, KSB was just 135 km away from Durban, so I could go home every weekend to see my lovely blue-eyed wife and our two sweet children, Monika, and Markus.

One Friday afternoon, I arrived home later than usual with a severe headache, probably from working in the sun all day. Shortly after 8pm, Estelle and I were called to a workers' meeting. This time, all the co-workers were to be in attendance, unlike the previous services intended only for the 'Kranskop group'. During the meeting, Uncle Erlo calmly informed us that someone had had a dream about the women working at the Mission's telephone switchboard. In the dream, a fire had started at the switchboard and spread along the phone wires before engulfing the Mission's buildings. Erlo stated that the work was in danger of burning down.

The dream was interpreted to mean that the switchboard workers were gossiping, slandering, and eavesdropping on private conversations. Estelle was one of these workers and was singled out with the other phone operators. They were called out by name to repent in front of the entire assembly. During the public confessions, some women admitted to participating in gossip or eavesdropping. However, my wife, who is known for wearing her heart on her sleeve, became emotional and

struggled to find the right words. To my surprise, Lidia Dube (Thofozi) deemed my wife's level of remorse insufficient. Estelle was interrogated and harassed until the early hours of the morning in an attempt to extract a proper confession. We were finally allowed to leave after 2am, but the meeting ended with a warning that the matter was not yet resolved as a sufficient level of repentance had not been demonstrated.

Upon hearing these words, Estelle felt singled out as the main perpetrator. She was in tears for the rest of the weekend, sinking into confusion, self-loathing, and despair. I left for Durban that Sunday evening, concerned about leaving our two children with a woman who was suicidal. Every day that week was a struggle, and I was overcome with anxiety each night. I returned to KSB the following Friday afternoon and found Estelle to be a bit more stable than she had been when I left her.

However, I was alarmed to hear that there had been further meetings in my absence. The following Saturday morning, I asked for an appointment to see Lidia. I sat in front of her and looked her directly in the eyes. Without blinking or averting my gaze, I informed her that this was the last time she would torment my wife. I warned her that if she ever targeted Estelle again, I would take serious action. Lidia stared at me silently. I calmly stood up and walked out.

This account may seem dramatic, but it accurately reflects what occurred. I had never experienced such psychological abuse and manipulation before, and it was evident to me that it was not from God. I made it clear that I stood by my threat towards Thofozi until we left KSB in April 1994. She must have realized I was serious because Estelle was never called into a workers' meeting again - neither the regular ones nor the 'special' ones for the Kranskop people. However, a question persisted in my mind: Why did I have to make a pointed threat against this supposed 'prophetess of God' to protect my wife from emotional abuse?

I also pondered how effective it would be to fight fire with fire if these meetings were truly from God. How does one obstruct the plans of God with human threats? If the leaders were acting in accordance with the will of the Almighty, would my anger really prevent their actions? I doubted it.

One day, while we were pitching tents at the base, a group of black workers suddenly stopped helping and sat down under a nearby tree. The rest of us continued working. As the soldiers, we typically carried the bulk of the labour. By this stage, the afternoon sun was hot and there was no breeze or shade where we were working. Meanwhile, the group that had stopped earlier were still sitting under the tree. This caused me to become frustrated and I walked over to them. I sat down and started talking, beginning with small talk as is customary in Africa. Through the conversation, I learned that they had quit because they were being asked to pay for their own daily commute by taxi to and from work. Most of the workers were from Kwa Mashu township in the south of Durban, where our military base was located. Since the job site was near Kings Park in the city centre, they had to spend a considerable amount of money on transportation.

Recognising that the labourers had legitimate reasons for going on strike, I made some inquiries and was able to locate the transportation officer. With his help, I arranged for a military truck to transport the labourers to and from work, free of charge. Once this solution was implemented, the labourers resumed their work and operations ran smoothly.

A few days later, the base commander summoned me to a meeting. Upon entering his office, I was greeted by two officers from the Head Office at Natal Command who identified themselves as part of the Military Intelligence division (MI). The Commander promptly inquired about my actions, leaving me initially stunned and confused. I searched my thoughts for any

laws or ordinances I may have violated that would warrant their attention. As I was still searching my memory, one of the MI officers asked me directly how I had managed to resolve the strike with the disgruntled workers. I calmly explained that I was able to communicate a little in Zulu and that I listened to their grievances before finding a solution by organising transportation. One of the officers then asked me if I would be willing to work for Military Intelligence. They stated that this position would release me from all further conscription duties. I requested a few days to consider their offer. Upon my return to the Mission, I discussed the matter with Uncle Erlo. He was enthusiastic about the idea, as he had become increasingly worried about the Greytown Security Branch of the South African Police (SAP), who frequently visited KSB and asked questions to gather information. He hoped that my involvement in MI would persuade the Security Police to leave the Mission alone.

That Sunday evening, I returned to Durban with a newfound sense of importance. As a farmer's son from Vredendal, I was suddenly tasked with the weighty responsibility of improving the Mission's standing with the SAP and, by extension, the National Party government. At that time, particularly in the context of Apartheid, the Mission was largely free of the more overt forms of racism. Black and white people lived together in communal settings, sharing accommodation and transportation. We referred to each other as 'brother' and 'sister'. The Mission was viewed with suspicion by the authorities due to the uniqueness of this type of community in 1981.

A few days later, I was summoned to the office of the Commander of Natal Command and was surprised to find the brigadier-general present. He emphasised the importance of my work before inquiring if I was acquainted with Jacob Zuma. At the time, I had no knowledge of him. He then informed me about Umkhonto We Sizwe, the military branch of the ANC, and shared

that Jacob Zuma was the head of their intelligence division. I was surprised to learn that Zuma's mother lived near Kranskop and had occasionally attended some of the meetings at KSB. The brigadier-general assigned me the task of monitoring Zuma and reporting any observations. I was instructed to pass this information on to Lt. Hans de Lange, who was part of the Security Branch of the SAP in Greytown. I was further instructed to report to Hans as soon as possible. The following weekend, I informed Uncle Erlo about the incredible opportunity I had received and assured him that I would prioritise the Mission's interests in all of my MI activities. I also pledged to provide him and the Mamas with frequent updates.

Soon after my discharge, I travelled to Greytown to report to Hans de Lange. He was a short man with a thin moustache, and my initial impression was that he was all business and not someone who one would want to cross paths with outside of a professional context. He provided me with several phone numbers to contact him and his supervising officers in Pietermaritzburg and requested that I report back to him every two weeks.

This marked the beginning of my task of providing them with information, which I continued until October 1984. Throughout those years, I was able to provide them with some valuable information, which I usually obtained through Erlo or Thofosi. For example, they would notify me when they learned of a congregant's son who had gone to Tanzania or Zambia for military training purposes. They could monitor their movements and inform me of their return. I would promptly contact Lt. Hans and typically received news a few days later that the individual had been apprehended.

Although I have forgotten many of the specifics, I do recall that after I began my work, the Security Branch ceased their visits to the Mission, leaving us in peace. My activities also endeared me to Erlo and the Mamas, resulting in my promotion to a more

prominent position within the Mission's hierarchy. The co-workers became aware of my special responsibilities, which were shrouded in secrecy. However, as I rose within the organisation, it seemed as though I was descending deeper into my own delusions.

9. First Outreach

Shortly after starting my work for the Security Police, Uncle Erlo asked me to fly to Cape Town to hold services at two schools in the Western Cape. It turned out that one of the senior co-workers had been invited there, but they thought it would be better if I went instead. Although I was surprised by the request, I agreed to go. At that point, I had not considered myself a preacher. I enjoyed working on the farm and helping Friedhold Stegen with the vegetable garden and chickens, in addition to my work at the dairy. When Uncle Erlo spoke to me, I hesitated at first and asked for more details about the assignment. He explained that the services were to be held at Vredenburg High School and Drostdy Technical School in Worcester, in conjunction with a Christian organisation for students. He assured me that my audience would only be the students and that I could deliver the same sermons at both schools. He advised me to talk about the revival at KSB and treat it like a regular service, similar to the ones I had sometimes spoken at on the Mission.

With some fear and trepidation, I flew from Durban to Cape Town that Friday morning and arrived in Vredenburg late in the afternoon. Upon my arrival at the school, a teacher greeted me and escorted me to my destination. The staff and students at the school were warm and friendly, typical of West Coast people, which helped me feel more comfortable. The meetings took place in a secure area belonging to the Military Academy at Saldanha, and I was pleased with how everything transpired. My preaching

assignment was conveniently close to my father's home, so I took the opportunity to spend time with family. On Sunday afternoon, my father picked me up from Vredenburg, and I spent a few delightful days at 'Begin', our family farm located 200 kilometres north of Vredenburg.

The following Wednesday, I visited Grandpa Kosie and Grandma Anna, who had recently moved into their own flat in a retirement village in Vredendal. Grandpa was always hesitant about my decision to work at the Mission. He struggled to comprehend why I left our family farms in Namaqualand to become a farm manager for a foreign Christian group led by Germans. During our conversation, he asked me some direct questions about my work and urged me to remain faithful to God and myself. However, by the end of our discussion, we were able to come to an understanding and pray together.

The following afternoon, I took an overnight train from Klawer to Cape Town before boarding another train to Worcester. Upon arrival, I was greeted by a young female teacher who drove me to the Technical School. Similar to my experience in Vredenburg, I did not know anyone there. I caught a ride on one of the buses transporting the staff and students, and we travelled along the road past Wolseley to a campsite nestled deep in the mountains near Tulbagh.

I delivered the same series of sermons that I had in Vredenburg and immediately felt a special connection with the boys from this school. Although their singing was raucous and out of tune, it was done with enthusiasm. This was the kind of environment in which I felt comfortable and was able to preach freely. It was during these meetings that I got to know Uncle Richard Marshall and Retha Louw, who were both teachers at the school. When the camp ended, they arranged for someone to take me back to the airport. I returned to Durban on the Sunday evening, feeling

grateful for the success of the meetings. When I exited the plane, Estelle greeted me with excitement.

Soon after those meetings, I received invitations from various places to preach. Over the next year, I held meetings at schools in Nuwerus and Estcourt, and returned to HTS in Worcester to speak to the students again. During that time I was also able to preach to adults in the Cape Flats, Durban, and Western Transvaal. However, many of my memories from this period are somewhat hazy. I do recall my father-in-law calling me and asking me if I would not consider cutting back on my practical responsibilities at the Mission to focus more on preaching. He believed that the Lord had given me a special gift, and I should make use of it as much as possible. His words helped me to overcome the reservations I had against preaching and perhaps also my slight prejudice against preachers. For that I will be forever grateful to him.

At that time, Estelle and I found ourselves without a car as my old Fiat had rusted and was undriveable. We had to depend on my father-in-law or Uncle Erlo's generosity to travel. Our predicament was finally resolved when my mother bought a new car and gave us her old Datsun 1200 GX. We named it 'Crinkle Cut' because of the hail damage it had suffered. It was an unattractive dark brown colour and lacked air conditioning or a radio. Nevertheless, it had four wheels, was inexpensive to operate, and served our needs adequately enough. Using my new mode of transportation, I travelled as far as Pretoria and Western Transvaal. Occasionally, I was accompanied by four other adults and a baby or two. We were content because we believed we were working for God and contributing to this great revival. And we were convinced that the ministry of KSB would transform South Africa and, eventually, the rest of the world.

10: The DAF Truck

In the early 1980's, Ian MacLean purchased the farm next to KSB. He was a kind and generous man with a background in civil engineering who often volunteered his services for new construction projects at the Mission. We became good friends and one day he mentioned needing a bulldozer to clear the tree stumps on his farm. My grandfather happened to be selling his equipment as he had recently closed down his construction business in Vredendal. I informed Uncle Ian of this, and he purchased one of the old D6 Caterpillar bulldozers along with various spare parts. As Uncle Ian had offered a lot of his time to help us at the Mission, Uncle Erlo and I arranged to pick up the bulldozer and deliver it to his farm. Vredendal is located on the opposite side of the country, making it a significant undertaking.

Over the next two weeks, we performed maintenance on Ian's DAF lorry and trailer, thoroughly inspecting the engine and cleaning the interior of the truck as well. As our journey would take us through the Free State and Karoo before reaching Vredendal, it was crucial to ensure the lorry was in good working order. Ian decided to join me on the trip at the last minute. However, we still needed additional funds to cover the travel expenses. I suggested that we order a truckload of vineyard posts from one of the plants at Mizpah that specialised in treated wood and sell them at a profit. Each post weighed six kilograms, and we purchased 3,000 to fill the lorry and trailer. I contacted my dad to discuss the logistics of selling them, and he promised to take care of it once we arrived.

Estelle drove us to Mizpah on the Saturday morning. We packed our sleeping bags and some food and were excited for our road trip across South Africa. While driving up a hill near Greytown, I noticed something was wrong with the truck. I shifted to a lower gear, but it still struggled to generate power. The descent into Muden valley was smoother for the vehicle. However, when we

faced another steep hill between Muden and Weenen, the engine began to falter once more. Despite revving hard, we were unable to maintain any speed and had to shift back into first gear. I instructed Ian to keep an eye out for large rocks in case we needed to stop and place them behind the truck's wheels to keep it from rolling. We managed to reach the top of the hill and arrived in Ladysmith by sunset, despite the difficulties we faced. It took us twelve hours to cover 135 kilometres due to the reduced speed. After booking a room at the Holiday Inn near the main road, we spent the night there.

The following day, we resumed our journey before dawn, still travelling very slowly. We maintained a speed of no more than fifty kilometres an hour in the Free State on the way to Bloemfontein. Occasionally we stopped briefly to check the load or have something to eat before continuing our journey. Upon reaching Senekal, we were diverted from the main highway onto a dirt road. As we approached a bridge, we noticed that it was only wide enough for one vehicle at a time. The sign next to the entrance indicated that the bridge had a maximum weight capacity of twenty tonnes. The vineyard posts we were transporting weighed around eighteen tonnes, which put us at least ten tonnes over the weight limit once we accounted for the weight of the truck and trailer. Ian had experience working on bridges during World War Two, and he and I got out of the truck to inspect the situation more closely. Since it was already dark, we had to rely on our flashlights. We thoroughly inspected the bridge's construction and Ian determined that once the trailer's rear wheels were on the bridge the truck's front axle would be only five meters away from the opposite side. Ian proposed driving slowly until the entire vehicle was on the bridge before accelerating rapidly. He believed that this was our best chance of crossing the bridge successfully in case it collapsed under us. With Ian's flashlight signalling me from the other side, I climbed behind the steering wheel. Feeling somewhat apprehensive, I

said a quick prayer as I cautiously approached the bridge. Fortunately, our plan worked, and I was able to cross without any trouble.

It took us thirty-two hours to reach Bloemfontein. At one of the petrol stations in town, the owners kindly offered us an old caravan to sleep in. After a hearty dinner, we slept soundly until late the next morning. Feeling refreshed after a good night's sleep, we continued our journey. We travelled through the seemingly endless plains of the Karoo, still travelling no faster than 50 km per hour. The following thirty-six hours were a blur as the road and my thoughts merged into one. At sunset the next day, we finally arrived at the Vanrhyns Pass. The next part of the journey was a long descent into Namaqualand, which was a daunting prospect considering the condition of our truck. After checking the tyres and brakes, I said a quick prayer and began driving down the mountain. Unfortunately, I was forced to stay in first gear for a full two hours before we finally reached the flat plains near the Gemsbok River and could take the truck up to a normal speed. By evening, we reached the 'Begin' farm where Grandpa Kosie and my father were waiting for us. Tears were rolling down my grandfather's cheeks as he greeted me.

It was only the next morning that my father realized the poles we had been carrying weighed ten kilograms each instead of six. There had been a mix-up when the order was placed. It suddenly became clear why the truck had struggled so much. We had been transporting thirty tonnes of cargo on a vehicle designed to handle no more than eighteen. No wonder we almost failed to make it past the mountains at Weenen! I shudder to think that we crossed a bridge with a vehicle that was far heavier than we realised. But one way or another, we made it. We were able to return to Natal with the bulldozer, and it also proved useful when construction began on the airstrip at the Mission. I believe the old

bulldozer of grandpa Kosie is rusting away in peace somewhere on a hill in KZN.

11. South-West-Africa

After I started preaching regularly, Uncle Erlo received an invitation from Reverend Ettienne Maritz, who lived in Stampriet, Namibia. He was trying to organise a preaching tour in various towns and had spoken to Erlo about the possibility of a team from KSB coming to South-West Africa, as it was called back then. I was asked to be part of the group, and my brother-in-law Arno flew us there in the Cessna owned by KSB. Our first stop on the tour was Lüderitz Bay, where we met a missionary named Reverend Hennie Basson. For the second part of the trip, we split up. Trevor Dahl, Erlo's brother-in-law who had married Estelle's older sister Naomi, took the services in Maltehoë. Erlo preached in Stampriet, and I travelled to Gochas every day to preach there. After reuniting, we flew together to Windhoek to be interviewed by the Channel 7 radio network studio, which had recently opened. We also spent some time at Oubaas and Ria Kotze's farm, near Stampriet.



Figure 17. Our team in Luderitsbaai. Ds Hennie Basson on the left.

It was there that I shot my first springbok. My maternal grandnephew, Oubaas Kotze, invited us to do some hunting in the dunes of the Kalahari. Despite missing my first two shots, I was able to successfully take down the springbok with my third shot. Uncle Erlo expressed some disappointment with my initial misses, so I was glad to be able to secure my prize on my third attempt. By the end of the hunt, I had bagged four springboks, providing us with a large supply of meat to take back home to Natal. Upon landing, I was filled with a sense of pride and importance. I had been selected to join a team that included the highest-ranking members of the leadership: Trevor, the Mission's second-in-command, and Arno, who was considered Mission royalty and successor to Erlo. This was an elite squad, led by the big man himself, and I was part of it!

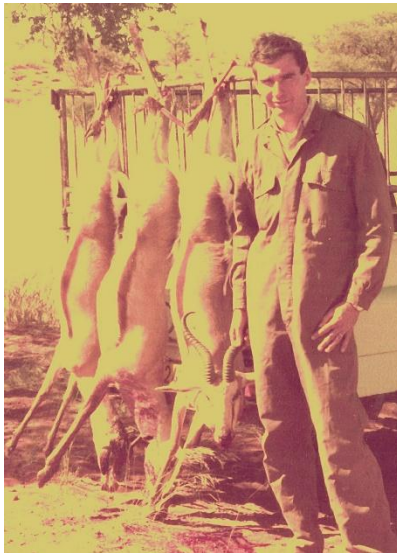


Figure 18. Me after shooting the third springbok.

The next year, Ettiienne extended another invitation to me personally, which he continued to do for years to come. Namibia became a regular preaching destination for me, and I travelled to

many different locations throughout that scenic country. The only larger cities I never preached in were Windhoek and Katima Mulilo. Every year, a few co-workers accompanied me on the long journey. The Mission leadership considered Estelle too 'unspiritual' to join me on these tours, and it was not until 1987 that this changed. The reason for the leaders' refusal to allow her to travel with me was never made known beyond their vague assessment of her, and they refused to allow her to accompany me even after I asked for it. She had continued serving as a personal assistant and driver to the 'Mamas' after we married, but after the arrival of Monika and Markus her workload became too much. She timidly asked if her duties could be assigned to someone else. They reluctantly agreed, but it came with some degree of backlash. In 1982, she also decided to step down from singing in the co-workers' choir. From that point onwards, the Mamas - especially Thofosi- gave her the cold shoulder.

In 1987, I informed Uncle Erlo directly that Estelle would be accompanying me on my next preaching tour. The people in Namibia were eager to meet her, and it was non-negotiable for me. I did not ask for permission but made it clear that this was what was going to happen. Etienne Maritz organised a special series of services that year. He asked if I could bring Uncle Erlo, his wife, and all his brothers and their wives. Although Uncle Erlo declined the invitation, the rest of his family members accepted, resulting in a team of ten adults. I was able to take Estelle and Markus with me, and it turned out to be one of the most memorable times of my life. I remained fully convinced that God had chosen me to be a co-worker at this uniquely blessed Mission, which had experienced revival. I also believed that He planned to use KSB to change the course of history in South Africa and the world, for the glory of His name.

When your allegiance is as blindly loyal as mine was, you do not dwell on trivial matters like spending weeks away from your

family over a period of five years. I had also travelled to Europe twice for up to six weeks at a time without Estelle. I submitted to and accepted these terms because I believed that the plan of God is greater than my own needs and desires and I even believed the leadership in thinking that there may be a lack of godliness in my wife's life. During my travels within South Africa, I also often travelled alone as the leaders believed that Estelle did not possess the necessary spiritual maturity to uphold the high standards of KSB and represent it effectively. All the while, I was ignorant of the fact that problems were growing and that we were drifting apart as a couple - all in the name of the God of KSB.



Figure 19. The Stegen brothers with their father and mother.

12. The Big Snake

In 1983, Uncle Erlo approached me to discuss a dream that someone had shared with him. The dream involved a giant snake on the mission station that extended some 400 yards from the hospital to Erlo's house. In the dream, it had also been suggested that the snake belonged to me since I fed it every day. After Erlo's

conversation ended, I promised to seek God until I understood the dream's meaning and identified any 'serpent of sin' in my life. Despite fasting and praying for over a week, I could not find any explanation for the rebuke. I was confused and sought advice from Uncle Erlo, who suggested that I might be disobedient to something that the Lord had revealed to me and that might be the cause. He suggested that it might be something small.

I spent time in the forests and valleys surrounding KSB to pray and reflect. Day and night, I wrestled with God, seeking an answer to where I may have been disobedient to His guidance. After much introspection and soul-searching, I concluded that the dream may have related to two instances in which I had ideas to improve the operations at the Mission but had not taken any practical steps to put them into action. Considering the expanding size and scope of the work at KSB, I had wondered why a large church building had not been built on the premises yet. Additionally, I had wondered whether it was worth installing a two-way radio network at KSB. However, I had not pursued these ideas further and now realised that my passivity may have been the reason behind the dream. When I mentioned these matters to Uncle Erlo, he became excited and urged me to take action without delay. He believed that my inaction was a form of disobedience and was what the feeding of the snake must be referring to in the dream.

A few days later, I met a man by the name of Philip Stott in the KSB dining hall. He was an engineer from Bloemfontein with experience in designing large buildings. I shared my idea of constructing a proper church building at the Mission and asked if he would be willing to oversee the designs. He agreed, and I rushed off excitedly to find Uncle Erlo before introducing them to each other. Philip moved his family to the Mission and stayed for many years, He was responsible for designing and completing the

auditorium – and it all occurred because of a dream about a snake.



Figure 20. This big hall shortly after we finished building it.

To resolve the second matter, I took Crinkle Cut to Durban to explore options for buying two-way radio sets. I returned with several different models to try out before making a final decision on the purchase. We installed the base radios in our room, which later became known as 'Room 5', where the Mamas lived. Additionally, I installed several radios inside Crinkle Cut and tested them by driving through the valleys in the Natal Midlands. At that time, Monika was still young, and Markus was barely able to speak, but even they were able to figure out how to respond to my calling on one of the radios. I used Uncle Ian McLean's Jeep to explore nearby mountains and find the best location for a radio repeater tower.

After discovering an ideal spot, I reported back to Uncle Erlo and suggested purchasing four or five radios, a home base radio unit, a radio tower, and a repeater set. Uncle Erlo had much bigger plans and instructed me to order fifty radios. Due to the

significant purchase, the CEO of the company in Durban personally delivered our order in his private plane. Shortly thereafter, Philip designed the radio tower, and we constructed it ourselves. Within a few weeks, our two-way radio system was fully operational. For the remainder of the year, I travelled to various parts of Natal and KwaZulu to install radios in our main outposts and preaching stations. Wherever I went on these journeys, people welcomed me with open arms, appreciative of my hard work and initiative in setting up the communication system. This was the second large project resulting from the dream about the snake.

I did not understand why it required me to fast and pray as I almost lost my mind for God to reveal His will about the church building and the radio network. I now understand that when God guides, His Spirit does so gently, without using frightening dreams about snakes. At the time, I was too inexperienced in my Christian faith to contemplate these questions. Life was exciting then, with many new activities and projects happening all the time. I had attained a position of importance at the Mission, Estelle was no longer being threatened or psychologically abused, and we were still in love, though I still harboured some doubts about her spiritual condition.

13. Deeper Into Military Intelligence

In October 1984, I was invited to hold a series of meetings at the agricultural society hall in Vredendal. Accommodation was easy to find as it was my father's hometown, and I was able to bring Estelle with me. We arrived a few days early to enjoy some time at my dad's beach house. The services went well, and we returned to the Mission with grateful hearts. Upon our arrival, we were informed that a group of individuals from the SA Defence Force had visited the Mission while we were away. Major Pieter

van der Watt had organized the visit, and a Commandant Tobie Vermaak had specifically inquired about me. Since commencing my work for the Police Security Branch in 1981, I had maintained contact with Lieutenant Hans de Lange from Greytown. I contacted Commandant Vermaak in Pretoria to inquire about his request regarding me. He informed me that he would be taking over as my primary contact, replacing Hans de Lange. I was not concerned about this change, as it did not matter to me who I reported to, as long as I was excused from attending any further military duties. I drove to Greytown to meet with Lieutenant Hans in person, and he agreed to the new arrangement.



Figure 21. Minister Adriaan Vlok visits KSB. Erlo is wearing the blue suit, standing next to the minister.

Tobie's personality was more open than that of Hans. While Hans was quiet and aloof, Tobie was friendly and communicative. He frequently contacted me to discuss a broad range of topics, seeking insight on how to resolve specific problems. At times, he even had me speak to Uncle Erlo to gain a broader perspective on social and political issues. Tobie was also a diligent worker as he

was extremely dedicated to his job, often working day and night to resolve any crisis they faced. He would occasionally contact me in the early hours of the morning for advice or to share information. Our friendship developed to the point where our families went on holiday together. His family also attended some of the services I regularly held in the Western Transvaal.

Shortly after we started working together, he asked me if I would be willing to help care for injured black soldiers at the military hospital in Voortrekkerhoogte, just outside of Pretoria. I accepted his invitation immediately, and that was how I came to know the people of the 32nd Battalion from Buffalo Base in the Caprivi region of Namibia. It was located near the Okavango River in Northern Namibia. My heart went out to them, as many of them had sustained significant wounds and were far from home. I organised some Portuguese-speaking members of KSB to join me and facilitate communication as these soldiers mostly spoke Portuguese.

Tobie also became a frequent visitor at KSB. Together we would make appointments to see the Mamas and Erlo, seeking their advice on important decisions that had to be made by PW Botha and later, FW de Klerk. Sometimes the issues he needed advice on were so urgent that he would drive through the night to be back in Pretoria the following day. Some of the topics discussed were also highly confidential, which made him uncomfortable discussing them over the phone. Eventually, he had a special phone installed in my house with a 'scramble' feature. By pressing a button, the entire conversation would be disguised, as though we were talking underwater. Tobie explained that these precautions were necessary due to the sensitive nature of the information we were exchanging.

Estelle and the children were unaware of these activities, only knowing that Tobie was a frequent visitor to our home. As we did not have a spare bedroom, Markus would give up his room during

Tobie's visits. My family was aware that some of my travels were shrouded in secrecy, especially when I was being transported by military plane. Due to the many trips I took during this time, it is impossible to record all of them in detail. Estelle and the children accepted this as a normal part of our family life. Although my family knew very little, I made sure to keep Erlo and the Mamas informed of my activities. All significant aspects of my work with Tobie were promptly discussed with them.



Figure 22. Minister Vlok addressing me at the old milking shed.

Thanks to my association with Tobie, we were able to arrange for KSB's Choir No. 1 to conduct services on military bases like Voortrekkerhoogte, Phalaborwa, and the Cape Coloured Military Base near Cape Town. I usually accompanied the choir and delivered most of the sermons, while Uncle Erlo would usually arrive later for the main event. This approach proved to be successful for many years.

14. The Change

From 1982 onwards my lifestyle became increasingly hectic and it became difficult to devote enough time to my practical responsibilities at the mission. In addition to my work on the dairy and cattle farms, I was involved in the construction of the new auditorium, the operation of the radio network, and the management of the mechanical workshop.

Towards the end of 1978, Pastor Hennie Basson visited KSB for a few days. He had recently graduated with a degree in theology from Stellenbosch University. We spent a lot of time around the dinner table discussing the Bible and Christian doctrine, and he pointed out several areas where my teaching needed correction. As a result of these conversations, he gave me a booklet called "We Believe". It contained the Three Confessions of faith and other theological statements that serve as the foundational beliefs of the Dutch Reformed Church. I devoured the booklet and read and reread it so many times that I could quote passages by heart.

A short time later, Professor Koos Van Rooy from the Reformed Theological School in Hammanskraal also came to visit. As I had with Pastor Hennie, I took the opportunity to engage in theological discussions. During one of our conversations, Uncle Koos gently suggested that I needed to engage with some of the writings of the old theologians to understand the long history of Christianity and to correct the narrow view I had of the church and my role in it. It was a gentle but stern rebuke of my self-involved confidence in my own experiences and opinions. He gave me an abridged version of Calvin's 'Institutes of the Christian Religion.' Once again, I read the book voraciously and repeatedly. These two books by Hennie and Koos proved to be the beginning of a theological awakening in my life. I was confronted with orthodoxy as found in church history and the logical thinking and exposition of the Reformed theologians. As a result of my new-

found studies, I became increasingly aware of a discrepancy between my beliefs in KSB and the confessions of church history.

At that time we were still happy at KSB. People were no longer harassing Estelle, I was well respected within the group, I had a good working relationship with Tobie and the military, and I was even rubbing shoulders with some prominent politicians. But I noticed that I always seemed to do better when I was away from the Mission. The doubts, contradictions, and instances of cognitive dissonance were easier to ignore when I was on the road. Perhaps it was also easier to rationalise the doubts I had when I was away and I was able to look at things more objectively. I was often away from the mission for more than six months of the year, often driving over 60,000kms per year. I would usually try to be back at the Mission on Monday before leaving again on Thursday or Friday.

I found the authoritarian style of management and decision making of the leadership very strange. At one point Uncle Erlo decided to buy a helicopter. In my previous assignment setting up the radio network, I had been put in touch with an organisation called Missionary Aviation Fellowship (MAF). At the time they were the largest organisation supporting missionary aviation, with aircraft all over the world. Naturally, this required a sophisticated communications network, so I decided it would be worth consulting them about setting up our own radio system at the Mission. This proved to be helpful as they were able to advise on which system to buy. When Erlo first mentioned his desire to buy a helicopter, I asked him to wait until I could contact MAF to see if they could make suggestions on which one to choose. He agreed and I immediately wrote to my contacts at MAF in the USA. They responded by warning me of the high cost, not only of the initial purchase, but also of the running costs of operating a helicopter. They also warned me not to buy one particular helicopter which was on the market at the time as it had proved

to be unstable and unsafe to fly. I passed their letter on to Erlo and we discussed the helicopter I had been warned not to buy. He was happy to accept the information and I assumed that he had been dissuaded from buying one altogether. It seemed extravagant to buy a helicopter anyway as the mission already had an aeroplane.

About a year later I heard through the grapevine that there had been a helicopter crash near Pretoria in which “our” pilot had been injured. It turned out that Erlo had ignored the advice of MAF and bought one of the helicopters they had warned us against. It had been kept near Pretoria because that was where the pilot was being trained. The badly damaged aircraft was loaded onto a truck and brought to KSB, where it was stored in a shed for years. Finally, Johan Neethling repaired it and someone else was trained to fly it. At last it was time for another test, and Detlef Stegen took off on a solo flight. Once again, the helicopter crashed.

Uncle Erlo did not want to discuss the matter - in fact, he made it clear that even talking about it was a sinful form of gossip. It soon became clear how serious he was. My mother-in-law and some of the other ladies had been discussing the helicopter purchase one day while working in the kitchen. The question was raised as to whether the money could have been better spent on improving and renovating the kitchen facilities. As a result of this conversation, an inquisition of sorts was held and the ladies were reprimanded for questioning Erlo. Apparently, he was the man of God and that meant his reasoning was not that of an ordinary man. He had heard from God, and to question his decision was to question the Almighty. Although the money had been wasted and the wrecked helicopter was now gathering dust in storage, there was to be no criticism of Erlo's decision.

Incidents like this made me question the very foundations of the Mission's faith and its leaders. Calvin and the other old

theologians became increasingly important in my thinking, as I sought to find answers to my questions.

15. Lemora Orchards

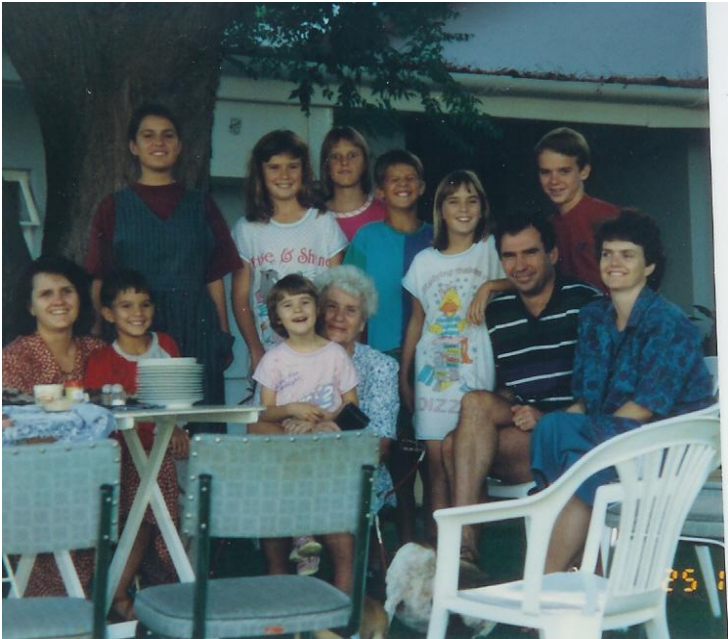


Figure 23. Renee with her children, Cato - my mother, me, and Estelle with our children. Happy days!

In 1984, Friedel distributed most of his belongings to his children, making Estelle and her younger sister, Renee, co-owners of the R M Stegen Family Holding company. Renee was already married to my brother Nico at that point. The news was received with great excitement. The company's assets included multiple farms in the Muden area and the Muden Valley Store, which they rented from Riaan van Zuydam. Renee and Nico had been residing on the Lemora Orchards farm in the Muden district for several years. The farm had become a favourite meeting spot for the family as it was

surrounded by nature. Activities like hiking, swimming in the Mooi River, hunting, and cookouts were the order of the day against the backdrop of the beautiful Mtanyana mountain.

My mother had invested money in the Boland Bank. I got to know the manager at the Pietermaritzburg branch, Mr. Buchner, quite well as I visited regularly. He hailed from the Overberg area in the Western Cape and spoke in the typical "Boland" manner. He expressed his opinions straightforwardly without beating around the bush. After opening several bank accounts, my family and I began working on our newly acquired farms in the 'Golden Valley' - a term used by locals to refer to that area of Natal. We had to borrow a significant amount from my mother to restock the shop and start renovations. A short time later, I received a bill from the Natal Agricultural Co-operation in Greytown stating that we owed R46,000. It turned out that they had previously made maize deliveries to our business that had not been paid for. And the bills did not stop there. We received a further two: R28,000 was owed to the Eastern Transvaal Agricultural Organisation and R21,000 was owed to another shop owned by my father-in-law. Within two months of taking over the businesses, our shop was bankrupt. I returned to Pietermaritzburg to see Mr. Buchner and informed him of our financial ruin. He suggested visiting our businesses with the bank's financial advisors. After reviewing our property and assets, they suggested that we expand our business quickly to avoid bankruptcy.

Following their advice, we immediately put plans into effect to increase profitability. Nico secured work as an independent contractor, renting out our tractors to plough the fields of local subsistence farmers. The nature of our work meant that we were paid directly by the KwaZulu government. We bought two new tractors with off-set disk ploughs and started working. We also grew a variety of vegetables and sold them to retailers in Muden through our marketing company, 'Muden Farm Fresh'. We

expanded into transport services and bought a larger truck under the name 'Muden Valley Transport'. Estelle would drive to Muden every week to help run the shop. I was responsible for bookkeeping and purchased our first computer to document the company's finances. I used Turbo Cash software, running it from one floppy disc while entering data onto another. The computer quickly became an essential tool for our operations, and I took it with me whenever there was free space in the car.

Unfortunately, we soon hit other obstacles. The government discontinued the subsidy they had provided to cover transportation costs for our deliveries of sugarcane to the mill. This meant that we no longer made any profit from our sugarcane farming. The business faced further disasters, including the stabbing of our shop manager during an armed robbery, an accident involving one of the drivers who crashed one of the smaller trucks, and the drowning of our farm manager, Bertus Obermeyer. It was a hard time for all of us.

Nico worked tirelessly to keep the farming enterprise afloat, and we were all forced to live paycheque to paycheque for five long years. During this time, I focused on my preaching and the work I was doing for Military Intelligence. We continued to run the transport and hawking businesses while Renee ran the shop. Nico continued his contract work for the government as well as managing the farm. Additionally, we brainstormed ideas to expand the business. I struggled to sleep during this time, but we remained optimistic that things would improve. Despite our good intentions we found ourselves falling further behind. Unfortunately, Nico's health began to deteriorate due to exhaustion, resulting in five kidney stones and frequent blood in his urine. Even with all our hard work, we were failing.

In September 1988, I was invited to visit the main base of the 32nd Battalion, also known as 'Buffalo Base', located on the Okavango River. I purchased films for my camera and borrowed

lenses and other equipment. After years of trying, I was finally granted permission to photograph the area on the border of Namibia and Angola where the conflict between South Africans and Swapo was taking place.

The weekend before my departure, we gathered once again at Lemora Orchards. The wheat fields were lush and green, and the orchards were starting to bloom. I took the opportunity to snap some photos, somehow aware that this chapter was nearly over, and it might be our last time together on the farm. I recall spending hours on the tractor one night, alone with my thoughts. I ploughed until the early hours of the morning, observing the distant lights while the tractor rumbled monotonously.

In April of the following year, Nico invited us to visit for the weekend. My mother and younger sister Nonnie were also there, and we barbecued some delicious meat together. Nico suddenly broke down in tears. "I can't do this anymore," he sobbed. "I feel like an old ox that has been worked to death. I feel like I'm being crushed under the workload." We looked at him, astonished. He was typically a man of few words, and it was rare for him to voice his complaints. This was the final straw, and we all knew it. We discussed possible alternatives for Nico and Renee, who at this point already had four young children. I eventually phoned my dad, and he agreed to let his farm manager go and Nico would take on the role. The whole family moved to Vredendal to live on 'Begin' farm.

In previous interactions Erlo had always been strangely silent when I approached him. After our farming disaster, however, he was suddenly full of advice and criticism. After Nico and his family left the farm in June 1989, he called me one Sunday evening. In the presence of my father-in-law he proceeded to point out everything I had done wrong and rebuked me for not coming to him for financial assistance and advice. Papa kept quiet and I stared at him in disbelief, taken aback by his blatant attempt at

gaslighting. I remembered the numerous times I had approached him and the Mamas over the past five years to ask for assistance and financial aid, only to be turned away. And now, he was accusing me of acting irresponsibly because I had not sought his help! Remembering the fight between Rex and Buster, I remained silent. I realized that I could not challenge my own “big Buster” without ending up wet, sticky, and smelling foul.

16. Landmines.

In early 1984, I was invited to lead a series of meetings in what is now called Namibia. These meetings were organised by Reverend Jacob Schoeman, whose ministry focused on the Himba people in Kaokoland. To reach him, I had to call a contact in Walvisbaai who would then transfer the call through a powerful radio set. Kaokoland was restricted to military personnel only due to the ongoing conflict between the South African military forces and SWAPO (*South-West Africa People's Organisation*). I discussed the logistics of the meeting with Jacob, and he agreed to meet me with his team at the Okaukuejo campsite in the Etosha National Park. Since the campsite was located outside the conflict zone, it was a much safer location, and we could enter it without any restrictions.

Joseph Sishange - a colleague from KSB - and I travelled to Windhoek where we were greeted by Eddie van der Merwe. Eddie was a well-known gospel singer in Namibia together with his wife Linda. They kindly accommodated us for the night in their home in Okahandja. The following morning, we woke up early and loaded our belongings into Eddie's small Datsun 1200. We managed to fit everyone and everything in, no doubt greatly exceeding the weight capacity. Two other colleagues also joined us for the trip, making it a tight squeeze with five grown men in the small car. We arrived in Outjo at sunrise and encountered a

roadblock supervised by several white policemen as we left the town. They requested identification and asked about the purpose of our travels. I explained that I was meeting with a pastor named Jacob Schoeman to conduct meetings in Etosha National Park. They were already familiar with him, as Jacob had passed through the same roadblock the day before. However, there was one additional obstacle. We were informed of terrorist activity in the area and were warned that SWAPO may have planted landmines directly south of the park. A security team was dispatched to clear the mines on the road to Okaukuejo. We were instructed to wait until the area was cleared before continuing our journey. Unfortunately, they could not provide an estimated time for completion.



Figure 24. Jacob and Wilma Schoeman (middle) with their 3 boys and some co-workers.

After discussing our options, we decided to proceed with the trip to ensure that the meetings started on time. The police allowed us to pass but warned us to stay in the middle of the road and watch out for landmines. We had about 120 kilometres of dirt road to cover before reaching the entrance of the Etosha National

Park. Needless to say, the rest of the journey was nerve-wracking. We all scanned the road ahead in silence. Eddie's knuckles were white as he gripped the steering wheel. We were surrounded by dense shrubbery and occasional acacia trees, but no people were in sight. I wondered silently about how one goes about identifying landmines. Would the terrorists leave a clue to signal the location? A branch or a small pile of stones, perhaps? I knew one thing for sure: if we hit a mine in the Datsun, we would not survive. It was also clear that I would not have time to react before my death. Mines do not give warnings before exploding. The thought that I could be facing God at any moment was sobering.

I also thought about Estelle. I had been upset with her over a trivial argument before I left. It is not uncommon for young married couples to argue about unimportant matters, and we were no exception. I cannot recall the specifics of the conflict we had that day, but it was likely over something insignificant, such as packing too many socks or forgetting to include handkerchiefs in my suitcase. I wrote her a brief message on a notepad, folded the paper several times, and placed it in the middle of my Bible. As I rested my Bible on top of my briefcase in my lap, I said a quick prayer to my heavenly Father, asking Him to preserve it in the case of my death. If something were to happen, I wanted Estelle to find my note so that we would not have any unresolved conflict between us as I entered into eternity. Fortunately, we arrived at the campground safely and were warmly welcomed by the people there.

Joseph and I shared a tent for the duration of the meetings. He is a big and easy-going person. Over the years, we have travelled together numerous times. Unfortunately, whenever we shared accommodation, mosquitoes always feasted on me while leaving him in peace. This proved to be a nuisance as I always preferred a good night's sleep when I had to preach or translate the

following day. I complained to him about the mosquitoes' attraction to me. He jokingly suggested that I learn to snore so that the mosquitoes would assume I am awake and leave me alone. Joseph could snore like a few people I knew! Despite the mosquitoes, the meetings were a wonderful time. Even today, people who were present sometimes remind me of how blessed they were by those sermons.



Figure 25. Me with two Herero ladies

We continued our journey by heading east to our next stop at Okakarara. I was scheduled to preach late that Sunday afternoon. Anyone with experience speaking in churches knows that this is the least ideal time of day as people are often tired and eager to relax. I had no choice but to preach at the time as arranged by Reverend Gawie van der Merwe. Despite my concerns about the congregation's attentiveness, I delivered a less-than-inspiring sermon, and my fears were confirmed as I observed some members dozing off in their seats. I even noticed Joseph teetering on the edge of his chair as he struggled to stay awake. I felt relieved when the service ended and looked forward to pouring myself a cup of coffee. However, before I could leave, someone approached me. He spoke Herero and had an interpreter with him who translated for me. He asked to speak with me privately.

The translator left us alone. I attempted to communicate with him in English, German, Zulu, and Afrikaans, but he simply stared at me blankly. Realising that my efforts were in vain, I sought out the translator once more. With his assistance, I conveyed to the man that I was unable to comprehend him, but that our Father in heaven understands his language and he is welcome to pour his heart out to God, after which I would pray with him. He spoke at length, and I struggled to remain awake. I placed my head on my hands resting them on my knees, trying desperately to stay awake. The man suddenly fell silent, which startled me out of my daze. I looked up at him and saw tears streaming down his cheeks. I prayed for him and asked God to hear his plea and have mercy on him.

A year later, I found myself in Okakarara again. I was amazed when Gawie told me how God had been working during our previous visit. God had answered my prayers, and the man had been completely healed. I will always remember his tears, my own weakness in trying to stay awake, and the incredible grace of God that worked despite all the communication challenges. God is the One who heals – not our faith or our prayers. In His grace, He decides these things and we can only obey.

17. Stegens In Namibia

Estelle's family are colloquially known as 'Springboks'. Not rugby players, in this case, but rather Germans who have lived in South Africa long enough to speak the local languages and embrace the culture like true Afrikaners. They tend to be more fastidious in adhering to their long-held European rules and traditions, but in most areas, they blend right in. They have also incorporated some of their own unique customs and quirks into our Afrikaans traditions. This included their use of language. I learned this vividly when enquiring about a relative's parents' health. 'They're

fine', came the reply. 'Mum just has the shits'. I nearly choked at the bluntness of his response and did my best to maintain my composure so as not to burst out laughing.

South Africa has benefited greatly from German immigrants. During Paul Kruger's presidency in the 1880's, many missionaries came over and made significant economic contributions to society. They embraced Africa as their own. However, the Germans have one weakness: their fondness for speeding. When South African Germans learned of the autobahn constructed under Hitler's dictatorship, they felt a void as they did not have a place to drive as fast as they would like.

My father-in-law was not immune to this vehicular temptation. He bought a BMW 728i and I soon discovered that the whole family had a wild streak when it came to driving. I experienced this first-hand while we were on our way to Pietermaritzburg. My brother-in-law Arno was driving, and his mother was quietly knitting in the passenger seat. He decided to use the stretch between Greytown and Pietermaritzburg to test the car's capabilities. As the speedometer hit 180km/h, my mother-in-law calmly asked, 'Can't this old wagon go any faster?'

Another memory that comes to mind is from 1985 when I invited the Stegens to join me for a series of meetings in Namibia. We squeezed into two BMW's and a Mercedes and quickly sped down the open road through the Free State to Upington where we spent the night. As the Karasburg plains came into view the next morning, our three-car convoy was reaching speeds of 200km/h. The road trip turned into a race, with the BMW's leading through the Karas mountains before the Mercedes overtook them on the open plains south of Mariental. Despite the many rules imposed upon the members of KSB, observing the speed limit was not one of them. After whizzing through Mariental, Markus urgently requested a toilet break. Uncle Manfred pulled over next to the road to let him out. The two

BMW's pulled up next to us with the rest of the family, just as he was about to relieve himself. He suddenly felt the eyes of his great-uncles and aunts on him and decided he could wait a little longer.



Figure 26. In the centre of Windhoek. Manfred on the right.

The series of meetings took place in Okahandja. All of the Stegens actively participated in the meetings. We gathered at the Dutch Reformed Church, and the services were well-attended. Many German-speaking residents from the area came to hear us, and we were pleased with how the meetings went. Instead of taking the direct route back to South Africa, I convinced the group to travel through the southeastern part of Namibia. I had many family members and friends in that area of the Kalahari Desert, so it gave me the opportunity to visit them. Although it involved driving on dirt roads, we were able to visit the Kalahari Gemsbok Park, which spans across Namibia, Botswana, and South Africa.

We enjoyed a memorable day in the Stampriet district before arriving at the park entrance in Mata Mata. We had booked a couple of cottages at Twee Rivieren, located at the southern end

of the park. It was approximately 120km from the entrance, which meant that if we observed the 60km/h speed limit, we would be on the road for another two hours. However, we were barely through the entrance gate when the three Stegen drivers suddenly felt the need for speed. Papa was driving the leading vehicle and soon we were hurtling down the dirt road, leaving a cloud of dust behind us. They seemed to be oblivious to the possibility of a cheetah or springbuck jumping out in front of the cars. We arrived at the entrance to Twee Rivieren in just over an hour. The gatekeeper was just about to allow us entry when a uniformed woman emerged from the office and approached us in a fit of rage. She demanded to know how we had arrived so quickly, using colourful Afrikaans words. It turned out that she had been in radio contact with the gatekeeper at Mata Mata, who had informed her of our departure time.

None of us could utter a word till Uncle Manfred explained with a twinkle in his eye that we had encountered a pride of lions, which had forced us to speed up for the remainder of the journey. She appeared unconvinced by his bizarre excuse and proceeded to glare at us with contempt before letting us go.



Figure 27. The Stegens rushing south.

The trip was memorable for the right reasons. Maybe it was the first time I had seen some authenticity among the larger Stegen family. Some real fun, spontaneous chatting, and even gentle

bickering between the brothers – and their wives. Perhaps they were not so different after all?

18. The Major

The Major was a short but powerfully built man. He rose through the ranks of the Mission's hierarchy in meteoric fashion, and it did not take long for him to be appointed as the leader of KSB's branch in Pretoria. He worked closely with Tobie, and everything he took on immediately flourished. His rapid appointment to such a distinguished role left me somewhat puzzled, given how careful the leadership typically was in giving people an elevated position within the organisation. I suspected the fact that he was a major in the Air Force played a significant role. He specialised in installing lights on remote landing strips. At that time, Uncle Erlo was busy constructing a landing strip on the Mission, and the Major was tasked with installing the lights. Concerned about the children being exposed to secular influences in a Pretoria school, he moved his family to the Mission and enrolled his children at Domino Servite School. He returned to Pretoria on Sunday nights to spend the week there.

In May 1986, the Chaplain General's office contacted me on a matter of some urgency. When I arrived, I met with a brigadier-general who was also an ordained minister. He expressed his appreciation for the good work being done at KSB and, after a lengthy introduction, he finally revealed his purpose for meeting me. The Major had been residing in Pretoria while his wife and children lived at the Mission. According to the brigadier-general, the Major had been engaging in extramarital affairs and had already initiated sexual relationships with three different women. He calmly presented a file containing compromising photos of the Major with the women. He offered to let me take the pictures as they included details of times, places, and names, but I declined.

In hindsight, it may have been wise to take the photographic evidence with me, but I was young and naïve and believed my word would be accepted as the truth.



Figure 28. Me, Erlo and the Major at the officers' club in Voortrekkerhoogte.

I drove back to KSB with a troubled heart and went to see Uncle Erlo to share the disturbing information that I had received. He listened attentively, as he usually did, and then calmly suggested

that I should see the Major in person. Referencing Matthew 18:15, he advised me to privately confront him about his sin, with the aim of leading him to repentance. A few days later, I took the initiative and went to Pretoria. I managed to schedule an appointment with the Major at his home one afternoon after work. Feeling somewhat anxious, I gently confronted the Major about the information I had received regarding his multiple affairs. Before I could finish speaking, he jumped out of his chair and threatened to physically throw me out of the house.

Disappointed by my lack of success, I returned to KSB and informed Uncle Erlo that my efforts had been in vain. I reminded him that Matthew 18:16 followed on from the verse he had used. This verse states that if the wayward brother does not repent, the next step is to take another brother and confront him together. I did not feel it appropriate to take just any brother with me and asked if Erlo would accompany me. I assumed that the next time the Major was at the Mission, Uncle Erlo would join me so that we could handle the situation together. I trusted his judgement as I was certain he had dealt with similar matters before. However, the Major returned to the Mission multiple times, acting as though nothing had occurred. He even took on additional responsibilities, such as a beekeeping project, with the approval of KSB's leadership.

Subsequently, we began receiving complaints from university students in Pretoria. During my time at the Mission, I frequently entertained the students as visitors and held retreats for them near Pretoria. Although it was a fruitful ministry, the Major attempted to manipulate the students and take over the leadership of the retreats. This behaviour led to complaints from the young people. Additionally, he interfered in their personal lives, including financial matters. At one point, he bought popcorn stalls and managed the business on behalf of the students, convincing them to invest their money in this promising

enterprise. However, he kept most of the profits for himself and used it to buy a new minivan. The students made very little from their investment as he had to pay off the van first.



Figure 29. Visiting military bases near the Kruger Park

The situation became increasingly untenable, so I spoke to Uncle Erlo again and again. He deflected by saying that the students that were being taken advantage of were also engaging in immoral behaviour. He proceeded to give examples of this, relating various stories of students who were promiscuous. He felt that the Major was doing his best to keep these young people away from sin. I stared at him blankly. Erlo might be confused about the matter, but it seemed clear to me. Two wrongs do not make a right. I pointed out to Erlo that sin is sin, regardless of who commits it. We needed to address the problems with the Major because he was in a leadership position and had exhibited this behaviour for several years. Despite my efforts from 1986 until the end of 1993, Uncle Erlo refused to compromise, leading to a strong disagreement between us.

The Major's immoral and manipulative behaviour led to the ruin of my ministry in Pretoria and the destruction of his family. Perhaps if Uncle Erlo had supported me and confronted the Major in 1986, things may have turned out differently. Instead,

the inevitable happened and the Major whose rise had been like a meteor “burned up” in a similarly spectacular fashion.

Maybe the trail of destruction could have been avoided.

19. Muzi

I had a great admiration for Baba Dube. He was married to one of the Mamas and was already elderly when I met him. He was an industrious man who ran a shop, a vegetable farm, and a small bus company near Maphumulo. However, he faced challenges in keeping his buses on the road due to the difficulties of purchasing fuel as a black man during apartheid. When I learned of his struggles, I offered to help and drove to Stanger to acquire fuel for him. I negotiated a contract with Total Fuel and leased a 2,000-litre tank and a stand from them. The next day, I delivered it to him after loading it onto one of the small trucks of KSB. Markus accompanied me and played with Baba Dube's youngest child, Sindi, while I assembled the stand and the diesel tank. He was then able to order bulk diesel using my name.

Our friendship blossomed, and a few months later Baba Dube requested my assistance in installing plumbing in his house to provide him with running water. Several weeks were required to lay a few hundred yards of pipe and to prepare the plumbing for the house. However, Markus was happy spending time in the hills near Maphumulo playing with Sindi. Sindi was an energetic child with a zest for life. She was probably 13 or 14 years old at the time.



Figure 30. Muzi with Jeffrey Sikhali in the Officers Club in Voortrekkerhoogte (near Pretoria)

Years later, Sindi married Muzi Kunene, a skinny and awkward man with a brilliant mind. We all knew that his intellect would take him far in life. Sindi was expecting their first child when I became aware that Muzi was acting strangely when in the presence of certain women. It was not something serious at that time, but when I happened to run into Uncle Erlo, I expressed my concern about Muzi and his relationship with these women. As the leader of the church, I thought that Erlo would be better equipped to deal with the problems caused by KSB's rising star. Erlo never gave me any feedback on my concern, and he seemed to think it unnecessary to take action to deal with Muzi's behaviour. I pestered Erlo about Muzi for many years, but he never responded in an open or forthcoming way to address the problem.

Despite not being conventionally attractive, it became increasingly evident that Muzi was a serial womaniser, engaging in inappropriate behaviour whenever he had the opportunity. While some Zulu men are physically imposing, with muscular and athletic builds, Muzi's strength lay solely in his intellect. I did not hear all the details of what happened, but I heard much later that he had divorced. The next time I saw him, he was accompanied by a different woman. After we left KSB, Muzi visited me twice, each time with a different woman by his side.

One day, a high-ranking officer from the Investigating Unit of the Police - known as the Hawks - contacted me to inquire about Muzi. I was puzzled as I had not had contact with him for almost ten years. Apparently, he had hacked into Jacob Zuma's personal computer and sold confidential information to Thabo Mbeki or his team. At least that was what the investigator suspected. This must have been a lucrative business as he was able to purchase a BMW while running his shady hacking operation. A short time later, Thabo was removed from political office by Zuma and Muzi became a fugitive. It was then that he murdered his white, female estate agent. Muzi was incarcerated for his crime and will remain there for a considerable time.

Muzi was a promising figure at KSB who fell from grace. Later I learned that he had molested or raped at least four girls whilst living at KSB. I still ponder whether his initial demise was due to his own actions or some other problem of which we were unaware. How might things have transpired differently if Muzi and Sindi had received help in the early part of their marriage? I still recall the two of them singing arias by Mozart and Bach in front of the entire congregation. Despite having no formal training, they had wonderful voices. I remember my heart racing as I listened to them, thanking God for these two Zulus who were singing His praises in German (*Muzi also spoke at least seven languages, including German*). And now he sits in jail.

I wonder if Uncle Erlo ever reflected on those times. Did he ever consider that the outcome would have been different if he had intervened and offered help for their marriage? Maybe he could have influenced Muzi while he was still young and impressionable.

20. The Nissan Truck

In my last year of high school, I had my heart set on acquiring my driver's license. I was particularly interested in a heavy vehicle license as I relished being behind the wheel of a large truck. I drove my father's Bedford truck to the licensing office in Vredendal and located Uncle Stoffeltjie Stoumann's office. He was sitting behind a desk covered in important-looking paperwork and glanced up as I entered. He recognised me and seemed puzzled by my intention to apply for a license. "Haven't you been driving for a long time?" I sheepishly admitted that I had been driving without a license. He seemed unconcerned by the legal implications and repeated his question. I nodded, and he produced a document, signed it, and attached it to my ID book. I have kept that license ever since and have driven many large trucks and other heavy vehicles over the years.

One of the more memorable times came about through a request from my father-in-law. He was someone who dreamt big but did not always take the time to sort out the logistics to match his ambitions. On this occasion, he asked me to pick up a large Oliver tractor which he had purchased in Bethlehem in the Free State and transport it back to his 'Belgrade' farm near the Swaziland border. I was thrilled to receive the invitation and eager to embark on the journey. He had arranged with Uncle Erlo to use the mission's plane to fly me to his farm where I was to take a Nissan lorry to complete the task. Papa provided me with funds to cover expenses and suggested I use them for accommodation

and meals. I spent Monday morning packing the essentials I would need: a toothbrush, underwear, and a thin blanket. After an hour in the air, we arrived at the farm where I was greeted by Ernie and Jenny Engelbrecht, the farm manager, and his wife. Before long, I was on my way to Bethlehem.

I had barely begun my journey when the clutch on the Nissan suddenly gave up the ghost. I managed to reach a phone box and called my father-in-law. He arranged for it to be towed to a local workshop, but they were only able to begin repairs the following morning. Fortunately, the Nissan had a small bed behind the seats, and I spent the night right there in the workshop while surviving on pies and cans of Coca-Cola.

By lunchtime the following day, the truck was back on the road. I was crossing the Drakensberg mountains into the Free State when I hit another snag on a dirt road near Harrismith. I was a little too reckless going around a bend, causing a diesel drum on the back of the truck to fly off and roll down an embankment into a stream. It proved to be a challenging task to retrieve the drum as it took several hours to roll it back to the truck. It was too heavy for me to lift onto the truck alone, so I had to wait for assistance. I asked a passerby to stay and help me lift the drum and I offered him some money to sweeten the deal. After repeating this process several times, I finally had enough manpower to lift the drum back onto the truck. Due to the delay, I arrived in Bethlehem late on Tuesday evening.

In those days, one could sleep almost anywhere, so I parked the truck in the middle of town to settle in for the night. I also purchased additional pies and Coca-Cola for dinner, as food options were limited. (*This was before Kentucky Fried Chicken and Wimpy opened in Bethlehem.*) I arrived at the tractor shop at 7am the next day, eager to pick up my tractor. The salesman gave me a quizzical look upon seeing my truck and informed me that the tractor I was picking up required a much larger vehicle due to its

size and weight. The only legal way to move the tractor was to drive it onto the truck and remove the tyres before securing the tractor to the back. We also had to drain the tyres of water to avoid adding unnecessary weight. Although it took most of the day, the tyres were eventually emptied and stowed away, and the tractor was ready for transport. I began my journey back to Belgrade farm but, due to the delay, darkness set in before I had even travelled sixty kilometres.

As I reached Kestell, there was a loud bang and the truck suddenly veered to one side. I regained control and pulled over onto the side of the road. Upon inspection, I discovered that both left-hand tyres on the back had blown. I only had one spare, so I replaced one of the damaged tyres and cautiously continued driving to Harrismith. My goal was to purchase new tyres at the truck shop before they closed for the night. I arrived in town at midnight and spoke to someone at the shop. Unfortunately, they did not have the correct size tyres to replace mine. My only option was to take the road through the Drakensberg Mountains to Newcastle, where they had some available. Due to the compromised state of the truck, I did not feel confident going faster than 30km/h, making it a painfully long journey. After driving all night, I arrived at the Mastertreads shop in Newcastle just as the first rays of daylight appeared. The tyres were replaced by 8am, and after a hearty breakfast of pies and Coca-Cola, I continued on my journey.

However, my streak of bad luck persisted. While nearing Vryheid, the tyres on the right side of the truck burst with a loud bang. Once again, I found myself stranded on the side of the road, frantically trying to flag down a passerby. As this was before the invention of cell phones, I had to rely on the kindness of strangers to help me contact my father-in-law. Eventually a Good Samaritan stopped to assist me, and I was able to send Friedel a message. Uncle Friedhold Duvel arrived several hours later with two brand

new tyres. By the time, the vehicle was roadworthy again it was Friday morning.

Just when I thought my troubles were over, the Nissan suddenly made an awful sound and the gearbox started shaking. I pulled over to inspect the engine but could not find any obvious damage. I chose to continue driving but had to limit myself to using only four gears and staying under 50 kilometres per hour. Any faster, and the shaking and rattling became too intense.

I arrived back at the Belgrade farm late that night. A thunderstorm had rolled in during the final stretch of my journey and the harsh weather persisted throughout Saturday. It meant we had to wait until Sunday morning to replace the tractor's tyres and attempt to move it off the back of the Nissan. That was when we discovered that the engine would not start, no matter how many times we tried. Ernie tried to pull the vehicle off the truck using one of his small tractors, but due to the rainy weather, the tyres simply spun in the mud. At times like this, one certainly learns to implement 'prayer without ceasing'.

I cannot recall how we finally managed to start the tractor and move it off the truck, but we must have succeeded eventually. By Sunday afternoon, the Oliver was parked in a big shed, and we were able to retreat inside and avoid the cold, miserable weather. I was in desperate need of fresh clothes and a good night's sleep in my own bed. I hoped that Erlo would arrange for me to be picked up with the plane so I could see Estelle and the children again as soon as possible. However, my father-in-law had other plans. He called and asked if I would be so kind as to drive the truck to Pietermaritzburg to have the gearbox repaired. By that point, I was tired of sleeping on the small bed in the truck and even my usual diet of Coca-Cola and pies had lost its appeal. I finally arrived back at the Mission on a Monday afternoon, but it took me years before I could eat another pie or drink a Coca-Cola.

21. Zambia, 1986

After returning from a recent trip to Europe, I received an invitation to preach at a youth conference in Zambia, just outside of the capital city of Lusaka. To prepare for the trip, I read extensively about the country. Joseph Sishange would be accompanying me, as decided by the Mamas. During this time, I also informed Tobie Vermaak about my upcoming journey. He informed me that there were refugee camps being operated by the ANC near Lusaka and asked me to gather information about the area, if possible. I was not informed of the exact location of the conference, and Tobie did not elaborate on what sort of information he was looking for. I wondered how I would obtain any information that would be useful to him, given the vague nature of the assignment.

The airport in Lusaka looked like a battlefield. The buildings were in complete disarray with piles of rubble scattered all over. Lusaka did not look much better. At the time, Kenneth Kaunda was the president and he had ceremoniously announced in 1973 that he would promote a form of socialism known as 'Zambian Humanism'. To make this a reality, he formed a one-party state and attempted to institute economic reform, with disastrous results. He also actively supported revolutionary movements in Angola, Mozambique, Rhodesia (*later Zimbabwe*), South-West Africa (*later Namibia*), and South Africa. His sympathy for political and social dissidents attracted revolutionary-minded people to Zambia, thereby adding more pressure to an already struggling economy. Instead of contributing to the country's infrastructure, many of the revolutionaries established military bases to overthrow their respective governments. This led to further attacks from neighbouring countries, including Portugal, Rhodesia, and South Africa.

Due to the political climate at the time, Joseph and I were regarded with a degree of suspicion. It was unusual for the people there to encounter a tanned 'Boer' and a former gangster from Soweto working together. We were suspected of working for the Apartheid regime and were thought to be part of the hostile South African military. We were asked to open and unpack our suitcases five times and were questioned for hours at the airport. Eventually, we were allowed to pass and found our missionary contact, who drove us to the conference centre. Our journey through Lusaka was impeded by the large potholes on the roads. Although I had planned to take some pictures of the city, our missionary contact advised against it, as it was illegal to photograph government buildings. Unfortunately, as none of the buildings had signs, so it was impossible to determine which ones were restricted.

During the trip, we encountered a large crowd that had gathered in the street. We cautiously made our way through the throng of people and asked about the source of the commotion. We were informed that a local shop had just received a shipment of salt. Apparently, this was a rarity for the locals. Perhaps Kaunda's socialism was not living up to the promises that had been made to the citizens.

The conference was a busy time, with three services held daily. The young people who gathered were from all over the country - mostly members of the Dutch Reformed Church. During the afternoon breaks each day, I would find a new path to explore and go for a jog. I used that time to search for the refugee camps Tobie had mentioned, but without success.

While returning from one of my afternoon runs, something caught my eye. I noticed a narrow path branching off from the road, surrounded by dense shrubbery. At the intersection of the path and the road, there were statues of a man, a cow, and a calf. They appeared to have been erected a long time ago. It suddenly

occurred to me what the statues symbolised, and tears started streaming down my face. The statues clearly portrayed a white farmer who had once owned cattle in this region. Presumably, he was someone who had aspired and laboured tirelessly to achieve a better life for himself. The individual was wealthy enough to commission statues, as evidenced by the solemn reminder of their former life in this area. I returned to the same spot the following day to explore further, but there were no signs of life or any remaining farm buildings in the surrounding area. The statue was the only remaining sign of bygone days. It seemed symbolic of the plight of the entire nation.

I still wonder what the farmer's story was and what had become of him and his dreams. I also wondered what would be left to remember me and KSB one day. Would we also be reduced to a statue by the side of the road as the solitary reminder of our existence?

22. Klipdam

Many years ago, Kobus du Preez preached a sermon at KSB. (*Kobus was a co-worker at the Mission but has since left and currently lives in France.*) During the sermon, he narrated the story of a farmer in the Free State who struggled to keep his livestock alive during a drought. The sheep were accustomed to eating green grass, so the farmer placed green-tinted sunglasses over their eyes to trick them into eating the dry stubble. As soon as the glasses were placed on the sheep, they immediately ate until they were full. As the days went on, the sheep continued grazing. The farmer was pleased with the results and planned to patent the green glasses. However, he soon noticed that the sheep appeared thin and sickly, as they were receiving very little real nourishment. Like the sheep whose perception was distorted by the glasses, it can take a long time to see the truth once you

have devoted yourself to a particular ideology and group. Some people prefer a distorted version of reality and continue to consume meaningless things, while neglecting their own wellbeing. This was something I had to learn the hard way.

Uncle Erlo called a meeting for the co-workers one day, and although Estelle was absent, I was required to attend. He told us about a mining venture which he saw as a promising investment opportunity. He went on to say that he had decided to invest our entire pension fund. Maintaining a pious demeanour, he asked if any of us co-workers would prefer to keep our money and invest it elsewhere. No one at the meeting dared question or oppose this latest revelation from our 'man of God'. After all, he had ushered in revival and opposing him would be fighting against God Himself. Erlo continued his speech, announcing that some of the co-workers would serve on the board of this latest financial project. I was surprised to hear that I was chosen among that group.

My father-in-law and I were assigned to search for a mine to invest in. We visited two gold mines on the East Rand together before Friedel scouted out a granite mine near Kruger National Park on his own.

A few days later, I had to leave to attend a preaching conference in South-West-Africa with Rev. Ettienne Maritz. I decided to invite my in-laws on the trip with me. On the way back, we drove to an abandoned diamond mine near the small town of Windsorton, located north of Kimberly. Rumours circulated that the De Beers bosses had neglected some promising mining deposits near their head office in Kimberly. This was our chance to find a lucrative investment opportunity!

Being a naturally enthusiastic and inquisitive person, I immersed myself in every book about diamond mining that I could find. I promptly drove my Toyota Cressida to Klipdam, the farm where

the 'undiscovered' diamond mine was located. Despite the harsh winter conditions, many people - including some of the co-workers from the Mission - dedicated themselves to the work. We repaired machinery and equipment while dealing with the weather and the isolation, sometimes for months at a time. Unfortunately, our 'Man of God' instructed us not to seek advice from other miners in the area, as we were God's servants and would receive divine insight on where to dig for diamonds. And so, we persevered, searching, and digging for months on end.

After months of hard work, we had nothing to show for it and it became clear that our efforts were futile. One day I recalled that I had met a miner from the Northern Cape after he had attended one of my services near Cape Town. I spoke with Erlo and my father-in-law and led them to believe that this man was a "believer" who supported KSB, even though I had only met him once. They both fell for my deception and encouraged me to track him down. To our surprise, he was mining in the same area. He was kind enough to offer to assist us the following day. With his experience, he pointed out where we were going wrong, and we were able to adapt our mining equipment according to his feedback. Within a few hours, we found some diamonds.

Our crowning achievement was unearthing a black 50-carat diamond. We felt overwhelming gratitude. Arno and I rushed back to KSB with the diamond to announce the good news in person. Upon our arrival there, we found Uncle Erlo waiting for us in Room 5, also known as the Mamas' room. Even though it was already late at night, we shared our discovery with them and gave thanks to the Lord together. Mama Dube then pondered, 'I wonder if this is the diamond that the Lord spoke to us about.'

However, our happiness was short-lived. Upon having the diamond professionally evaluated, we were informed that it was virtually worthless due to the numerous flaws it contained. Our only hope of profiting from our investment was suddenly dashed.

The mining operation proved to be a total disaster. According to an article in 1995 in the 'Finance and Technique' magazine, the final assessment was that we, along with all the other investors, collectively lost R57 million.

Although the entire venture was a catastrophic failure, we continued to trust our 'Man of God' - and some people still do. We were taught to submit to our leader, who was God's representative at the Mission. No questions asked!

23. More Of Klipdam

I received a phone call from my father-in-law one day. He was in Russia at the time, holding evangelistic meetings together with Erlo. He informed me that they had decided to plant 60,000 fruit trees at Klipdam and instructed me to begin preparations on the land immediately. I was surprised by the request, as it would mean clearing many hectares of land. He added that the saplings would be arriving in three weeks as they had already placed an order at Lichthelm Nursery in East Transvaal. The next morning, Karl-Heinz Duvel accompanied me to Klipdam where we inspected the Komatsu bulldozer and started repairing it. *(Karl-Heinz was married to Carmen – the late sister of Estelle. We were married at a double-wedding ceremony in 1978. Karl-Heinz had a farm near KSB and he and I were close friends until he passed away.)* After removing the bulldozer's turbocharger and starter motor, I took them to Kimberley for repairs while Karl-Heinz drove to Johannesburg to buy a new set of rollers and tracts. After replacing the necessary parts, and doing an oil change, we were able to start the engine.

For the following weeks, we worked seven days a week from dawn until dusk, clearing a vast section of land and preparing the soil for the saplings. It was winter, and the weather was bitterly cold as the land was located on the southern edge of the Kalahari

Desert. When the saplings were delivered, we still had not completed the preparation of the soil. We stored the plants in a water reservoir while we continued working. To expedite the process, we hired over two hundred temporary workers from a nearby settlement called Windsorton. When Erlo and my father-in-law returned to South Africa, they promptly came by to inspect our work.

During breakfast one morning, they informed me that they had also ordered 16 hectares worth of table grape saplings from the Groenberg Nursery in Wellington and that I should clear the additional land needed to plant the vines. I was shocked by the additional workload and decided to voice my objections. I pointed out that these decisions had been made without any discussion by the board of directors, including myself, who was Secretary of the Board. I also mentioned that our irrigation system was non-existent for such a large project and that typically a project of this size required at least twelve months of preparation. However, Uncle Erlo harshly rebuked me, accusing me of having a pessimistic attitude and opposing the work that God was doing. I had no choice but to keep my mouth shut and begin clearing the extra land and preparing the soil.

While I was overseeing the planting of the fruit trees and grape vines, Karl-Heinz repaired the old Bedford and converted it into a water truck. We watered the saplings from dawn until dusk. A day or two after we finished the planting, I visited the Department of Water Affairs in Bloemfontein to obtain approval to use the canal that crossed the Klipdam Farm as our source of irrigation. Unfortunately, I hit a dead end as the rights to the water source had already been allocated to other farmers. I eventually ended up in the Director's office and pleaded with him, explaining that we had already planted the trees and grape vines. It was once again reiterated that all the rights to that water source had already been allocated to other farmers. I then sought permission

to use the Vaal River on the other side of Windsorton but this proposal was also rejected. The only option left was to drill for a new water source. I had heard of a professor from Bloemfontein University who was an expert in this field and had helped discover a water source for a town called Barkley West in the vicinity of Klipdam. After agreeing on a price, I contracted him to visit our farm and provide us with detailed information on the best places to drill for water. The following weekend, he arrived with charts and equipment and was able to suggest the places where we were most likely to find water.

With this new information, we eagerly began our work. Our leaders had instructed us to plant 60 hectares of fruit trees and 16 hectares of vines, and we believed it to be the will of God. They also wanted to plant more hectares the following year, so it was imperative to find a reliable water source. We hired the best drilling company available to drill boreholes, each 15 inches in diameter. The machine drilled at all three suggested sites but still no water was found. We drilled deeper and deeper until blue smoke hung over the farm like a misty cloud. But still, no water.

As a result of our lack of irrigation, approximately half of the saplings did not survive the summer. The yellow Bedford drove up and down each day, trying desperately to keep the saplings alive. During the Christmas period, Estelle and the children joined me for a visit to the farm to inspect the remaining half. By April, most of the plants had died, leaving only ten percent of the saplings with which we had started. The 16 hectares of grape vines did not last longer than a year, leaving only about 2 hectares worth of surviving plants. Despite our efforts to keep working and watering, the situation remained dire. It was terrifying to watch it all unfold. As a director, I was ultimately responsible for this unfortunate outcome. Despite knowing the risks, I obeyed Erlo and my father-in-law, and spent months away from my family,

working sixteen-hour days in the brutal conditions of Kalahari Desert.

I hope to have the chance to visit the Klipdam farm again someday to see if any of the trees or vines survived. If so, I would have some closure knowing my work was not all in vain. We spent hundreds of thousands of rand on fertiliser alone that year, not to mention the cost of the saplings, fuel, labour, and the time I invested.

We remained committed to the cause and worked diligent. Feeling like I was contributing to a greater work was the only thing that kept me going.

24. Domino Servite School

The people at KSB do not tolerate any mischief from a child. They cling to the belief that any such behaviour can be resolved with a good, old-fashioned hiding. I am not entirely sure how this became so central to their belief system, but I suspect it was left over from the infamous Kranskop meetings. According to the leadership of the Mission, the Lord had instructed them to dole out severe beatings to children - even ones as old as 18. They were told that their parents had neglected to raise them properly. This included children whose behaviour was exemplary. Even those who performed well academically and were appointed as prefects were not safe from the cruel treatment dished out to the students.

The Mamas called me one day and calmly informed me of a male student who had committed a trivial infraction. Apparently, he had been found writing a love note to a girl and the message had been intercepted before he passed it on. They asked the student's uncle to give him a beating, as any relationship and romantic

interaction between boys and girls was strictly forbidden at KSB. I was stunned to hear that in the process of being beaten, the student had died. I felt nauseous as they took me to the room where the boy's body was laid out on his bed. I could see bruising on his back and neck, but his body did not show any open wounds from the beating. Everything around the bed was neat and tidy, and it would have been impossible to tell from the state of the room that something violent had occurred. I drove to the Kranskop police station and asked to speak to the commander. Dewald van der Spuy knew me well as he was familiar with my dealings with the security branch and Military Intelligence. I told him a white lie, exaggerating the offence of the student to make it sound like his love note had been sexually explicit in nature. I also informed him that his uncle had responded in frustration and given him a serious beating. I asked for leniency on behalf of the uncle as he was a co-worker at KSB, and quite a senior one at that. The police later arrived at the Mission and removed the body before taking it to the mortuary.

During the autopsy, they found some bleeding on the brain. Despite this, the police helped us to sweep the incident under the rug by informing us that if the parents were willing to give a statement to say that the death was an accident, they would pursue the case no further. And that was how the matter ended. I cannot even recall if a funeral was held for the boy. In all likelihood, the burial was conducted similarly to what we read of in Acts 5. His body was probably just buried unceremoniously in a hole somewhere. No sermon or eulogy was delivered, and the unmarked grave soon disappeared into oblivion.

Sometime in 1989, I was on the South-West border when I received a call from one of the Mamas. Apparently someone had had a revelation that they were to start a school at KSB, and they wanted Estelle to be one of the teachers. Initially I was unconcerned as by that stage I had put firm boundaries in place

to prevent the leadership taking advantage of my wife. I asked the Mama to have Estelle phone me. The two of us made some small talk before she told me how fearful she was of accepting the teaching position. She was sure that it would open the door to allowing them take advantage of her and make unreasonable demands of her time. I suggested that she accept the job on the condition that very clear boundaries were observed: they were not to ask her to attend extra-curricular meetings, no demands were to be made of her outside of teaching hours, they were not to ask her to teach anything except German classes, and they were not to interfere with her teaching. The Mamas agreed to these terms.

Thus, Domino Servite School was born. The name translated as "We Will Serve The Lord." Based on what happened at the school over the years, a more accurate name would have been: "Here you will serve the Lord exactly as we demand, or you will be punished." Children of all ages came from far and wide, soon to be moulded into the KSB image of a "Christian" child.

I recall an occasion when a teacher asked the class to write an essay detailing their experiences in the schools they had attended prior to coming to Domino Servite. The assignment did not go as planned, as 80 percent of the students expressed a nostalgia for their old schools and wrote that they wished they could be back there. A day or two later, some of the male co-workers showed up in the classroom and the students who had expressed a desire to be back in their old learning environment promptly received a brutal thrashing.

It was not unusual to hear loud moans and screams in the evenings as the students were "sanctified" the Domino Servite way - through physical violence. My children were so traumatised that they began to experience sleepless nights and recurring nightmares about the beatings being handed out to the students. Estelle tried to block everything out as she did her best to survive

in this chaotic environment. But our home also became a refuge for some of the children who desperately needed love, acceptance, and peace. Many a time I would walk into my house to find the room full of smiling children sipping coffee. Their faces would light up when they saw me. By KSB standards, I was not a very good parent as I was not strict enough. Markus got a few hidings from me, but the girls mostly avoided them. Our home was one that was filled with laughter. And we focused on pleasant activities for the school children, including hikes in the forest and barbecues.

On one of these excursions, I took Markus and some of his friends to swim in a large agricultural dam. I was unaware that it was strictly forbidden for the students to go swimming and when the leaderships found out, the students - including Markus - all received a hiding. I felt I should have been the one to receive the punishment as the entire event had been my idea. I was angry and sad at what occurred and spent a long time talking to Markus about it. I told him that there are people who misinterpret the will of God and that we must remain strong. Markus understood and forgave me.

Despite many such testimonies from former students, the leadership claims until this day that we are all lying about the punishments meted out to students. They pretend like it never occurred or claimed it stopped in 1994.

25. Security

The Mamas called me to discuss the inadequate security measures at KSB, expressing particular concern for Uncle Erlo's safety. At the time, I was fervent and blindly devoted to the cause, and I took immediate action. I approached the head of the Natal Civil Protection Association in Pietermaritzburg, who appointed me as the head of Civil Protection for KSB and the Maphumulo

region. To improve the security at the mission station, I divided it into sections and appointed leaders for each one. Additionally, I created security teams for each section and briefed them on emergency procedures, such as assembly points, escape routes, and other logistical information in the event of a security threat. Finally, I contacted Tobie Vermaak to request assistance from the army. He was able to pull some strings and we were granted a monthly ammunition supply of 5,000 rounds from the local Commando offices in Greytown. It consisted of bullets for the R1 military rifles, which were the standard issue for commandos in the rural areas at the time. Navy Captain Joe Johnson also visited KSB to provide training in combat shooting and VIP protection.

The team I was part of was named Group 8, with Jannie le Roux as my second-in-command. The rest of the original team consisted of Justice Cele, David Jaca, Bruno Hlongwane, and Mandla Makhanya. Later, Thomas Mapanga and Jeffrey Newlands joined us. Our primary duty was to ensure the safety of the VIPs at KSB. Specifically, uncle Erlo and the Mamas. We took our responsibility very seriously and dedicated ourselves to advanced driving courses, night marches, rappelling, first aid, marksmanship, radio communication, and hand-to-hand combat. The schedule for our marksmanship training was so intense that I went through 15,000 rounds of 9 mm pistol ammunition in four years. Once a month, our unit, along with security members from other sections who wanted to participate, would spend time in the forest at Uncle Ian Maclean's farm. The sound of R1 bullets would echo through the trees, making our ears ring.

We expanded our firearm training courses to include KSB members of all ages, both male and female. The goal was to strengthen the Mission with licensed firearm holders, ensuring vigilance for any potential attack. Barney Mabaso donated an old Nissan Patrol pick-up truck, which I drove to the Joosten's farm at Mount Alias and they converted into an off-road combat vehicle.

It looked quite intimidating after its makeover, so we named it 'Iron'. Despite the significant costs of running our security teams, the Mission's finances always provided sufficient funding, even if it meant that money for basic necessities was sometimes scarce.

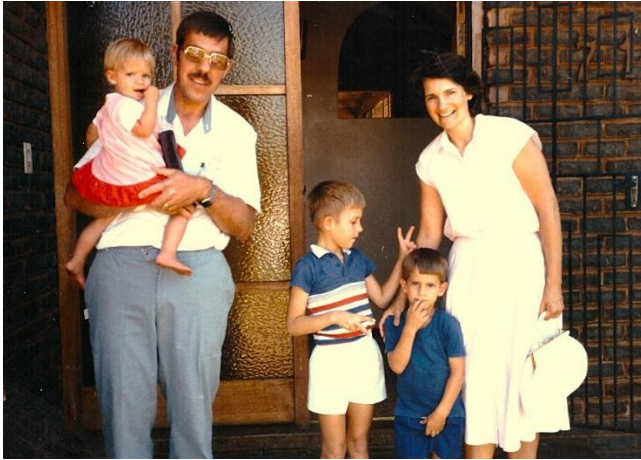


Figure 31. Tobie and Ilse Vermaak. Many years ago

We decided to extend our security beyond the confines of the Mission and began deploying members of the team to businesses and properties outside of KSB which were owned by co-workers. We also spent countless nights patrolling the woods and hills around the Mission. It was exhilarating! Our uniforms and equipment included balaclavas, knives, radios, a pistol, and a handheld rifle or shotgun. We had turned our Group 8 into such an elite combat unit that even some sections of the SA army would have looked like amateurs in comparison.

It was late one cold and rainy night when things went seriously awry. The Mission's chicken coops were the frequent target of thieves, and they had been broken into once again. Some of the men from Group 8 apprehended them, catching them red-handed. One of the thieves suddenly pulled out a knife and lunged at a member of my security team. It proved to be a costly

lapse in judgment on his part. A shot rang out from one of our shotguns, and struck him just below the knee, effectively blowing his leg off. Another one of the intruders also attempted to stab one of my men, but thankfully only managed to graze him with the knife. The confusion and chaos were enough for him to attempt to flee, and he ran towards nearby trees for cover. Another shot rang out and struck the man in the back. He died a few hours later at the Greytown hospital. Everyone was satisfied with the outcome and even the police were grateful that we had been able to defend ourselves and prevent further theft of our chickens.

A year later, another violent incident occurred. Mandla Makhanya and his young wife had decided to go home for Christmas. His brother showed up at the house one night, drunk, and proceeded to make threats about raping Mandla's wife. He eventually attempted to break in, at which point Mandla shot and killed him. I was called to the scene later that night and drove to the police at Maphumulo to report the incident. As it was still the days of Apartheid, they were satisfied with my report, and never investigated it further. I do not know if they even visited the site of the shooting or took statements from Mandla or his wife.

We also gave Muzi Kunene some firearm training, but his eyesight and coordination were terrible. His lack of skill proved to be fortuitous in later years when he attempted to shoot his son. Due to his poor aim, the bullet only grazed his ear. Unfortunately, his lack of marksmanship did not prevent him from shooting and killing his female landlord.

Many years later, we were living at the "De Brug" farm when the phone rang. Nelson Mandela was in office at the time and things were gradually becoming more peaceful in South Africa. A Special Forces Commandant was on the other end of the line, calling from the Bluff Base near Durban. He was under the misapprehension that I was still involved with KSB and warned

me that his unit was unhappy with the military style training we were doing on the Mission. He was concerned there would soon be casualties if our security units carried on with this type of training. As I had little knowledge of the current situation I asked for more details. Apparently, an Australian who had worked in the Special Forcers was training some of KSB's security units, and they were conducting their activities in the forests and mountains in Kwa Zulu Natal. I assured the Commandant that I would resolve the matter immediately, even though I was unsure if he were telling the truth or not. I phoned KSB and spoke to one of the leaders, informing them of the warning I had received. They must have heeded my advice, because when I phoned the Commandant a few weeks later, he informed me that the problem had been resolved.

The potential attack on the Mission which we had trained so hard to defend ourselves against never came. The results of the entire security venture proved to be catastrophic and made the Mission more militant – at least in my opinion. Even more so in later years when Lidia Dube's staged kidnapping went awry and Thobekile was beaten so severely that permanent brain damage was sustained.

As the saying goes – “Those who live by the sword, die by the sword.” That is true, even at KSB.

26. The Jersey Bull

My sister Nonnie is thirteen years younger than me and spent most of her childhood at KSB. After my father divorced my mother, I felt a sense of responsibility to be a positive role model for her. She and my mother moved to KSB when I got married to Estelle. She always respected and looked up to me, even addressing me as “Boeta” (“older brother”). During one of her school breaks, she decided to come work with me on the cattle

farm at the Mission. She proved to be a useful assistant as we branded calves and vaccinated the entire herd. The cattle consisted of a variety of breeds, including seven types of bulls and three types of cows. We eventually decided to sell or slaughter all the bulls except for the Fries bull. My brother Nico purchased the Jersey bull from KSB for his farm in the Muden Valley. Those who have experience working with cattle will know that Jersey bulls can be quite difficult to handle due to their passionate and mischievous nature. What they lack in size, they make up for in temperament.

Nonnie accompanied me the day we transported the bull to Lemora Orchards, where Nico worked. She wore a floral dress and fancy shoes, as was typical for women living at the Mission. We loaded the bull onto the Toyota truck and secured it with cattle bars to prevent it from moving around in transit. I had ample experience transporting bulls and so it was just another day at the office for me. I placed a bundle of rope behind the seat, and we set off for Lemora Orchards.

While passing Karl-Heinz Duvel's farm on the way to Kranskop, there was suddenly a loud crash and the truck's roof began to buckle. Initially I thought an airplane had lost control and landed on us. I quickly hit the brakes, but before I could bring the vehicle to a stop, the bull rolled off the roof and landed on the road in front of us! It ended up underneath our bumper. I took hold of the bundle of rope and leapt out of the truck. As I approached the front of the vehicle, I noticed the bull's frenzied gaze fixed on me from underneath the bumper. With little time to spare, I wrapped the rope around its horns before it scrambled out and bolted down the hill at full speed. I clung to the end of the rope for dear life, managing to maintain my balance. Fortunately, the rope was over twenty yards in length, enabling me to gradually release it until I regained control.



Figure 32. Nonnie with her family. Some years back in the Kalahari

I was young and fit, and the bull was still shaken from its fall off the truck, so he ran out of energy before I did. I spotted a sturdy pole in the distance and sprinted towards it. When I reached the pole, I still had a few meters of rope left. I observed the bull veering towards the left of the pole and circled around the right side. I quickly wrapped the rope around several times, causing the bull to come to an abrupt halt. The weight of the bull almost dislodged the pole from the ground, but it was now firmly secure. After catching our breath, we exchanged a few glances. Initially, it remained stationary before gradually approaching me. As it drew nearer, I pulled the rope tighter, moving further away. When the bull was next to the pole, I quickly looped the rope around a few more times to secure it tightly to the pole.

When I finally made the long trek back to the road, Nonnie was still sitting in the truck, dumbfounded at what had occurred. We drove to Karl-Heinz's farm and were grateful to discover that he was home. He quickly jumped into his yellow Peugeot pickup truck and rounded up a team of workers to come and help. After hours of pushing and pulling, we finally managed to secure the

bull onto the back of the truck again. This time, I made sure to double-check that he was properly tied down. I used all the rope I had and basically wove a web around the bull to secure him to the trellis. He struggled and bellowed throughout the journey to Muden, causing the truck to veer and swerve.

In Greytown we realized that it was long past lunch, and I was ravenous. I parked the ugly brown Toyota Dyna across the street from the Wimpy on Greytown's main street, and we strolled casually inside and sat down at a secluded table. The contrast between Nonnie and I could not have been more stark - her in her fancy dress and me in my smelly and dirty blue overalls. The bull's bellowing caused a bit of a disturbance outside, but we kept eating and did our best to ignore the stares from the other customers. We breathed a sigh of relief when we finally arrived at Lemora Orchards.

The bull had a happy ending, living peacefully on the farm for many years. However, he held a grudge against me, and I could feel his hateful glares whenever we visited in the years following.

Nonnie is now a grandmother and lives in the United States. I still miss our "bull transport outing" and eating at the old Wimpy in Greytown.

27. Buffalo Base.

In September 1988, an army officer asked me if I would be interested in visiting the 'Border' region, where the Namibian, Angolan, and Zambian borders meet. I immediately accepted the invitation and shared it with the leadership at KSB. I was instructed to visit as a civilian and my job was to observe and take photos. I was thrilled at the chance to visit an active combat unit and explore the Caprivi region of Namibia, which I had never seen before. Joseph Sishange was once again assigned to accompany

me, and we set off to visit Buffalo Base on the Okavango River, where the 32nd Battalion was stationed. The unit was founded by Colonel Jan Breytenbach and they gained fame for their operations in Angola. As most of the soldiers were Portuguese speaking from Angola, I invited Mario Rochas to join us on the trip since he was originally from there and knew the language. He was also a dedicated member of the Pretoria branch of KSB.



Figure 33. Rev Sydney Middlemost at the back. Mario Rochas on the right with Joseph Sishange hidden behind him.

Joseph and I were flown by military plane from Durban to Pretoria, where we spent the night with Danie Bosman and his family. The following morning, we met Mario at Waterkloof Airbase and caught another flight to Mpacha Base near Katima Mulilo in the Caprivi. From there, we flew to Omega Base, touching down late in the afternoon. By the time we arrived at Buffalo Base, the sun was starting to set. Reverend Sydney Middlemost, the resident chaplain, warmly welcomed us and

showed us our accommodation in the officers' quarters before we joined him for a hearty meal in the officers' mess.

Buffalo Base and the neighbouring settlement for the families of the soldiers - known as Pica Pau - stretched for kilometres along the eastern bank of the majestic Okavango River. The buildings consisted mainly of wooden cabins or reed huts that blended seamlessly into the surroundings. As the vegetation was so dense along the river, it was difficult to spot the buildings from the air. Electricity was only available for a few hours each day, but the absence of modern technology added to the peaceful atmosphere. Wild animals roamed freely, and it was common to spot elephants or buffaloes wandering around the buildings. The officers' accommodation was also made of wood and reeds, with a view overlooking the river. Looking out of the window, I could see various types of antelope grazing and many species of birds in the trees. This part of the Caprivi is known as a birdwatcher's paradise with more than 460 local species.

One night, I was awoken just after midnight by a rustling sound outside my door. The electricity had been switched off for the night, and the base was quiet. After listening for a while, I concluded that it must have been a mongoose or a pheasant enjoying a fig from the sycamore tree in front of my cabin. Since my assignment was to observe and take pictures, I decided to do my job. I carefully removed the camera from the bag and attached the flash. Slowly opening the door, I stepped outside with a camera in one hand and a flashlight in the other. I could no longer hear any rustling sounds, so I assumed the animal had scurried away. I turned on the flashlight to confirm my suspicion and found myself no more than 5 meters away from a huge elephant bull. I retreated into my cabin as quickly as possible, but the grey giant seemed unperturbed by my presence and started eating again. I stood in the doorway for a while, enjoying the

moment with this magnificent creature. I also used the opportunity to take a photo.



Figure 34. Buffalo in the flood plains of the Okavango very close to Buffalo Base.

During one of our excursions, we visited the school in Pica Pau, where the Portuguese-speaking children were educated. Since it was a warzone, the school depended on military draftees as teachers. They were mainly young Afrikaans men who had a limited understanding of the local language. The classrooms were made of reeds, and planks served as desks. The buildings stood in a clearing under tall acacia trees. I observed some children playing happily as we were shown into the classroom of some of the younger students. Upon entering, the children promptly took their seats, and the teacher began the morning session by presenting pictures based on Bible stories. For each picture, the class recited a summary of the story together in unison. For example, “This is Moses. He delivered the people of Israel from Egypt” or “This is David. He killed the giant, Goliath.” The teacher then held up a picture depicting the devil. Without hesitation, the

children continued: "This is the devil. He is a fokop." The word 'fokop' does not have an accurate English equivalent but roughly translates to 'useless' or 'good-for-nothing.' Perhaps the English word "fuck-up" comes close. In Afrikaans, it is typically used as a swear word, and one would usually reprimand a child for using it. Hearing a group of young children using an inappropriate word in unison without skipping a beat struck me as terribly funny, and I struggled to contain my laughter. It is still the best description of the devil I have heard!

A few days later, on 15th September, United Nations Resolution 435 came into effect, initiating the process of Namibia's independence. South Africa was ordered to withdraw its troops from Angola that same day. This marked the beginning of a resolution to the conflict in this troubled part of the world. The previous evening, at around 8 pm, we had heard the sound of hundreds of military vehicles arriving at the base. The next morning, every available space was filled with vehicles and small tents. During the day, soldiers drove to the river's edge to bathe and wash their clothes and equipment, seemingly unconcerned about the crocodiles and hippos in the water. I took the opportunity to meet some of them and take pictures, pondering what the future held for Angola and Namibia.

That night, I couldn't sleep, so I walked to Pica Pau, which was a few kilometres south of our accommodation. In the distance, I could hear singing and chanting, so I decided to investigate. I discovered a group of children dancing around a bonfire in the middle of the dirt road. One child was beating a small drum, while the others took turns to start new songs. I observed them for a while, pondering the meaning behind their songs. Were they reminiscing about the bygone days when Angola still enjoyed freedom and peace? Or were they dreaming of a brighter future as they looked ahead? I cannot help but wonder where they all ended up.



Figure 35. On the parade ground. Morning of 16 Sept 1988. Rev Middlemost with the Officer Commanding

On that Sunday, I preached to a large gathering of black and white soldiers. After the service, we were treated to a lavish feast in one of the larger halls on the base. We were considered VIPs and the red carpet was rolled out to make us feel welcome. I was seated between Mario and Joseph, conversing with one of the officers across the table from me. He was an attractive mixed-race man with his stunning wife seated next to him. In the adjacent seat, there was a rather intimidating-looking soldier with a very dark complexion. Mario was conversing with him in Portuguese when they suddenly became very animated. Mario stood up and walked around the table to where the man was seated before giving him a long hug. The table fell silent as everyone wondered what was happening. I asked Mario about the man's identity, and he explained that he was a former soldier who had fought against the Portuguese during the revolution. Mario, who had been part of the Portuguese army at the time, knew of the man's reputation as a fierce guerrilla fighter. Despite numerous attempts to capture him, he always managed to evade his pursuers. After more than fifteen years, they finally met as friends, having once been mortal enemies. They embraced as brothers, both having lost their

homelands and become refugees under South Africa's apartheid regime. They now found solace in worshipping together and sharing a meal.

That day taught me that life has a way of changing things over time. Even adversaries can transform into allies. Unfortunately, the reverse is also true: your closest friends can become your worst enemies.

28. Namibian Independence

In January 1989, Uncle Erlo contacted me to discuss a new political venture for the Mission. Tobie Vermaak had approached him at the Johannesburg airport, asking if KSB could assist with the election campaign in Namibia. Tobie assured him that his department would provide the necessary funding and that he would have free reign to assist the campaign in any way he saw fit. After praying about it with the Mamas, Erlo and the team decided that this matter needed to be given priority.

Using the money provided by Tobie, I bought a Toyota Hi-Ace minibus and a Hilux Double Cab four-wheel drive. I registered both vehicles in my name at the Kranskop municipal offices. I also opened an account at the Trust Bank branch in Pietermaritzburg and deposited the remaining funds. I was entrusted with handling the financial matters and only needed to provide a basic overview of my expenses, which I documented meticulously.

A few days later, accompanied by Kjell Olsen, I flew to Johannesburg. Tobie met us there and joined us for the second leg of the journey to Windhoek, Namibia. That evening, we stayed at the Kalahari Sands Hotel and met with senior military officials at their head office, known as the Bastion. One of the people we met was Colonel Sarel Visser, the head of the Chaplaincy Division of the South-West-Africa Territorial Forces.

Later that day, Eddie van der Merwe joined us and together we boarded a small plane for Oshakati. We introduced Tobie as “Mike de Villiers” to Eddie, who had no prior knowledge of Tobie or the fact that the SADF was sponsoring the trip. Upon arrival at the airport, a soldier in a blue Land Cruiser was waiting for us, and we were driven to the office of Chief Albert Nuele, just south of Oshakati. We also had a meeting with the commander in charge of Military Intelligence in Sector 10 of the border area which included the capital town of the region called Oshakati. After having our final meal at the Driehoek military compound in Oshakati, we flew back to South Africa.

Shortly after returning, the Mamas agreed to another trip to Windhoek, this time with Fano Sibisi and Muzi Kunene accompanying me. Our purpose was to meet with Reverend Etienne Maritz and his friend, Ephraim Angula. Angula was a well-known Lutheran pastor who had earned the nickname “the Andrew Murray of Ovamboland.” At the Avis branch of the airport, I rented a car and drove to Okahandja, where Etienne was the pastor of the Dutch Reformed congregation. We stayed there overnight, and Etienne accompanied us the rest of the way to Oshakati. Despite having to cover 700km, we arrived by late afternoon as we were not forced to adhere to the speed limits. Later that afternoon, we met with Reverend Angula - a dear brother whom God had used mightily. He arranged for us to meet Bishop Kleopas Dumeni from the Lutheran church and also Reverend Paulus from the Dutch Reformed Church in Ovamboland. Both meetings went well, and it appeared that we were making progress in our goal of establishing connections for our outreach.



Figure 36. Muzi Kunene, Fano Sibisi and Rev Ettienne Maritz at the restaurant in Namatoni - Etosha National Park

On April 1st, 1989, UNTAG (*United Nations Transition Assistance Group*) was scheduled to take over from South Africa and guide the country towards independence. Before the handover, our small team arranged to travel to Ovamboland. We were ready to depart from the Mission at 6am when Mama Nsibande arrived. She informed us that the Lord had given her a message, promising to grant South-West-Africa to us if we acted as His shepherds. Our goal was to succeed where the 'Boere' had failed, by being faithful in our role as shepherds of His flock. I trusted her message completely and committed myself to being faithful in our task of shepherding. Our response was to pray earnestly together.

We arrived in Oshakati on the Thursday afternoon and settled into the accommodation that had been organised for us by the Commandant of Military Intelligence. The team consisted of Mpangeni Mabaso – the younger brother of Barney Mabaso, Fano Sibisi, Muzi Kunene, Jeffrey Sikhali, Boy Nkhala, Joseph Sishange, and me. The following Saturday, we drove 300 km on a dirt road to Opuwo to meet Reverend Jacob Schoeman, our

missionary contact in the Kaokoland area. We returned to Oshakati later that afternoon, arriving after dark. UNTAG had taken over that day and, thus far, everything appeared to be running smoothly. The following day, we headed north towards the Angolan border. I delivered a sermon during the Sunday service at Reverend Paulus' church. After the service, he joined us on a visit to Chief Gabriel Kautima, the leader of the Kwanyama people, the largest tribal group in Namibia. Chief Kautima warmly welcomed us and, with tears in his eyes, informed us that around four hundred SWAPO fighters had entered his area from across the border. He warned us that they would kill us if they found us. He was unable to warn the security services in the south and requested our assistance. Without delay, we set off. I drove the Hilux 4 x 4 bakkie while Mpangeni drove the Hi-Ace. We hurried back to Ondangua and reported the imminent threat presented by SWAPO at the Air Force base in Ondangua. Our task completed, we returned to our accommodation in Oshakati.

The next three days were an anxious time as we were instructed to stay indoors and keep a low profile. The fighting raged around us, making sleep impossible. The South African Forces were permitted to rearm and leave their barracks. On Wednesday, we joined a convoy under military protection. We left the Hilux bakkie with the Commandant in Oshakati and drove 3,000 km back to KSB without stopping. Within nine days, SWAPO surrendered, and the Mount Etjo agreement was signed, finally bringing peace to the region.

A few weeks later, I returned to Namibia. This time I was accompanied by Joseph Sishange and Karl-Heinz Duval, my brother-in-law. We secured seats on a military plane from Pretoria to Oshakati and held meetings throughout Kaokoland and Ovamboland. We used the Hilux bakkie for transportation. In August of that year, I chartered a plane to fly the entire coworkers' choir from Durban to Oshakati. I also hired a bus and

driver for the choir, which met us at the airport upon our arrival. We spent a month travelling around northern Namibia, singing, and preaching from Swartbooisdrif to Windhoek, before continuing east to Gobabis. Everywhere we went, we were received with open arms. We preached and sang with hope, feeling that we were fulfilling God's will in this country. I thrived in that environment, not only because I loved Namibia, but also because I was able to organise the finances and logistics of the trip.



Figure 37. Erlo Stegen. Waldemar Engelbrecht and members of Choir 1 in the military airplane

Election day finally arrived, and I sat next to the special phone hidden inside my office closet at KSB. Initially, the reports filtering in from all over were cause for optimism. The head of Military Intelligence in Sector 10 shared an update that the people were responding positively to the SA Defence Force personnel working at the voting booths and there was no intimidation. However, the final results revealed a different story. The prediction that SWAPO would lose the election by a landslide did not come true. In sector 10, not all the black soldiers and policemen had voted for the

democratic parties. Even some of our own fighters had voted for SWAPO.



Figure 38. An openair service near Tsandi in Ovamboland.

Despite our certainty of being in God's will, the results left me completely disillusioned. Why did God promise something only to fail us so terribly? To make matters worse, I contracted malaria and was forced to spend weeks at home while I recovered. I was only strong enough to walk as far as my living room, where I would sometimes lie on the sofa and stare at the hills while tears streamed down my face. Whether it was depression or malaria, I did not know. I realised that it was the end of an era - the end of apartheid, the end of KSB, and perhaps the end for me as well.

I penned a long letter to my bosses at MI, informing them that the kingdom that apartheid had built for the white man had crumbled and that the ANC was going to take over in South Africa, just as SWAPO had in Namibia. I suggested that it would be wise to privatise all of the government's services including the army and the police as soon as possible. My suggestions were ignored. But I initiated a lengthy process of removing myself from the predicament I was in. It took me years to get there and to restore a sense of normality and stability after the work I had engaged in for years.

29: Swartboois Drift



Figure 39. Under the trees at Swartbooisdrif

I believe that most of us have certain locations that evoke nostalgia and special memories. One such place for me is Swartboois Drift on the Kunene River. Over a hundred years ago, this drift was used by the Afrikaner Trekkers who moved into Angola to escape British rule. Nearby is a memorial site honouring their memory, including several graves bearing some very moving epitaphs. It was a place I frequently visited when we did safaris in that area. It was desolate, hot, and remote.

In August 1989, KSB's main choir travelled to the region, accompanied by Uncle Erlo and some visitors from overseas. This was shortly after UNTAG had taken over control of Namibia, and the security situation was still fraught with a certain amount of tension and instability. After our convoy of eleven vehicles arrived, we were able to purchase a goat from one of the local Himba people. It was promptly slaughtered and divided up to feed everyone. The South-West-African Defence Force sent a company from the 201 Battalion to accompany us under the command of lieutenant Wilhelm de Beer. We spent a pleasant night under the beautiful acacia trees on the banks of the Kunene

River. After a hearty meal of African goat and vegetables which were slowly cooked in a large pot, we had a memorable evening devotion before settling in for the night. The members of the choir slept on the ground in the middle of the campsite while Uncle Erlo bedded down on the back of a pick-up truck nearby. The visitors and soldiers each found a spot on or near one of the vehicles. As I was in charge of security at KSB, the Army had given me a sub-machine gun to help with the protection of the group. I moved a short distance away from the main group and positioned myself behind a large bush. With my weapon by my side, I soon fell asleep.

Sometime after midnight, I was startled awake by a strange sound. Although there was no wind, an eerie noise was coming from the northern side of the campground, close to the river. On the other side of the river was Angolan territory. I put on my boots and gripped my gun firmly as I made my way cautiously towards the river. I could hear Erlo's peaceful snoring, but other than that, everything was quiet. As I approached the sound, I was certain that it was coming from just behind the next tree. I stood there for some time, trying to determine what the noise could be. It sounded like an old musical instrument called a jaw harp. Accompanying the twang-twang sound was a deep-throated humming, occasionally punctuated by a clapping sound. Hearing the sound drifting through the darkness made for a very unsettling experience.

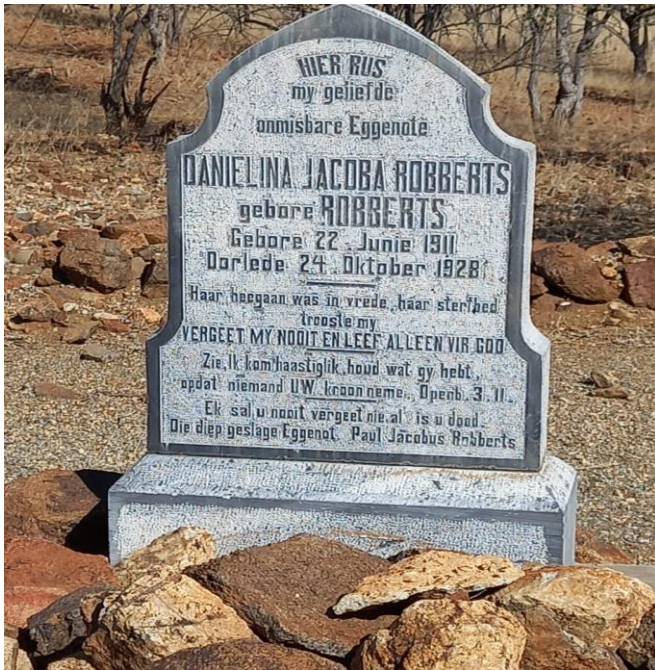
Eventually I peeked around the big acacia and found a Himba soldier seated there, leaning against the tree trunk with his R5 semi-automatic rifle propped up beside him. He held a small bow in his mouth and a tiny stick in his hand, striking the string of the bow to produce the twanging sound. The clapping sound was from when he struck the wooden part of the bow itself. From deep within his throat came a monotonous, guttural melody. He did not seem to be aware of my presence, or if he was, he was

unperturbed by it. He simply continued enjoying his 'Himba Trompie' as the sounds drifted off into the night.

I quietly returned to my sleeping bag and settled in once again. The Himba soldier continued to play his soft, traditional music, and it seemed to represent the sound of freedom, safety, and hope. I fell into a peaceful sleep, content with the knowledge that we were being guarded through the night. It reminded me of God, who watches over us even when we don't realize it or understand His ways. He is always awake and present, and we are always safe under His watchful eye.

As the sun began to appear, I did another quick check of the campsite to make sure everything was in order. To the south of us were some hills. I could see the vague outline of what looked like a monument on one of the hills and decided to investigate. Upon closer inspection, I realised it was a memorial of some kind. I carefully moved some of the stones away from the grave-stones and read the inscriptions. It was dedicated to the Dorsland Trekkers who had passed by on their way to Angola before returning in 1928. Not far from where I stood, I could make out a pale grey headstone in the dim light. It read: "Here rests my beloved, indispensable, wife Danielina Jacoba Robberts" accompanied by the date of her death: "24 October 1928". But it was the words underneath the date that stood out to me and touched my heart: "I will never forget you, even though you are dead. You're grieving husband, Paul Jacobus Robberts." The tears flowed freely down my cheeks. This poor woman was barely 17 years old and had to die in this remote and desolate part of the world. I could understand the deep anguish expressed by her husband. Perhaps the words were especially poignant as I was far from Estelle and felt isolated in this forgotten part of the world. I felt a kind of nausea developing in the pit of my stomach as I imagined what Paul must have experienced in losing his wife.

I sat down on a pile of stones and gazed across the Kunene to the mountains north of Angola. I silently wondered if Paul ever found another wife. Had he and Danielina had children? What led to her early demise? What were the dreams she had that went unrealised? What had their marriage been like? Did she die looking upon the things of this world like Lot's wife or was she taken to heaven on wings of grace?



That's why Swartboois Drift is one of my favourite places. The monuments bear witness to people's dreams, hopes, sorrows, and despair. It serves as a microcosm of the human experience. I still make a point of visiting that memorial every time I am in that area. I take my dear wife with me and we stand, hand in hand, and hold each other tightly. We were also very young when we got married, but we were blessed to grow old together. And the Lord has been so good to us. Despite the many trials of life, we have lived long enough to see our dreams become a reality.

We came across many “desolate plains” and have often been in the “Valleys of Despondency”. But we live and we still dream. There at Swartboois Drift we always pause to reflect and seem to fall in love all over again. We always leave with a profound sense of gratitude.

“Thank you Danielina. Thank you Paul. Although you never knew us, you touched our hearts.”

30. CFT

During the time when I was still passionate about the KSB cause, a co-workers' meeting was called one day. Although Mama Dube was usually quiet, she led the proceedings on this occasion. She suggested that we - the 'true believers'- form an organisation to combat the spread of liberalism in the South African Council of Churches. The co-workers agreed with her proposal, and she nominated men for various leadership positions. Fano Sibisi as president, myself as vice-president, Muzi Kunene as secretary, Kjell Olsen as vice-secretary, Dietmar Joosten as treasurer, and Alpheus Mdlalose as vice-treasurer. No objections were raised to her proposition, and thus Christians for Truth (CFT) was established.

Tobie and his colleagues at Military Intelligence were very enthusiastic about this new cause and readily provided funding. With their financial aid, the organisation grew rapidly. Within a few months, CFT established several branches in South Africa and abroad. Within a year, it had grown to the extent that it organised international conferences. We also established connections with other organisations such as 'Veterans for Victory' and 'Frontline Fellowship' and invited some of their leaders to speak at CFT conferences. This included missionaries like the controversial Dr. Peter Hammond.

As vice-president, I was responsible for mobilising all of our branches, which required me to spend more time on the road. I did not mind this as it distracted me from the nagging questions and doubts that I found myself pondering about KSB. We organised 'peace marches' throughout South Africa, including a memorable one in Pietermaritzburg. The event was well-attended, and several important people, including Uncle Erlo and the Mamas, participated. I coordinated the security for the march, which involved military personnel and police officers. Snipers were stationed on various rooftops along the route, and bodyguards were assigned to protect the VIPs. I did not attend the march itself for I was responsible for manning the three radio-systems at the Mission that were part of our communication network. Jannie and the Group 8 men were assigned to protect the VIPs. Everything seemed to be running smoothly until someone noticed a group of young men acting suspiciously. They appeared to be monitoring the march. I received updates from the snipers who informed me on their radio network that the young men were approaching some of the VIPs and signalling to someone before moving away again. After observing the group for a while, I contacted Group 8 and asked them to confront them directly and determine their identity.

We found out that they were working for a man named Bongani. I had had had some contact with Bongani before and decided to ask him about his involvement in the march later that week. He confirmed that 'Auntie Thofosi Dube' had put him in charge of organising security for the event!

The next Thursday, we held our regularly scheduled CFT council meeting. Although Erlo, Lidia, and the Mamas did not hold any official positions within the organisation, they frequently attended these meetings. I confronted Lidia about what I had learned from Bongani. Lidia confirmed her involvement, stating that she had not deemed it necessary to inform me or anyone

else about her decision to organise another security team. I remained calm and explained to Lidia that three different security groups had already been involved using three different radio networks. Her failure to communicate about her own group could have led to a disastrous misunderstanding. With armed personnel present, there was a risk of someone being hurt in the confusion.

Lidia was unable to see the problem and refused to acknowledge her lack of judgment. As a senior co-worker at the Mission, she believed she had the authority to issue orders without informing me of her decisions. She thought it was crucial for the various security teams to operate independently of each other to avoid any potential compromise. I disagreed with her explanation and informed her that I had been in charge of the security of the peace march from the start. I added that I should have been notified as I did not pose a risk of causing a security breach. Lidia persisted in rejecting my explanation, and the meeting continued for hours. As the discussion progressed, other members of the management team began to turn against me and side with Lidia. One after another, they apologised for doubting Lidia's judgment. I refused to back down, and a stalemate was reached. To diffuse the situation, Uncle Erlo eventually spoke up and informed Lidia that she was in the wrong and owed me an apology. She mumbled a half-hearted excuse instead of apologising, and we were finally able to proceed with the rest of the meeting.

As I walked home that evening, a thick fog blanketed the Mission, much like the confusion enveloping my mind. I found myself pondering what was happening at KSB, the true role and position of the Mamas, and the purpose of CFT. These questions kept me up at night as I mulled them over in my head. While reading my recently acquired complete copy of Calvin's 'Institutes', I recalled something he had written in Book 4. He discusses the fallibility of man and the church as an institution, emphasising the crucial

need for us to maintain a posture of humility in which we are ready to acknowledge our sin, failings, shortcomings, and human frailty, both personally and corporately. He argued that repentance, forgiveness, and restitution were necessary prerequisites for a church to maintain God's blessing.

I had further questions: Why did Lidia persist in defending a decision she made without input or approval from others? And why did the other members of the CFT board side with her? What was my purpose here? Was I just there to add a rubber stamp of approval?

31: Jopie du Plessis

My mother is from the West Coast. As the only girl in a family of six children, she learned to be assertive and confident in any situation. She was known for her straightforward communication style and would always speak her mind. For instance, she would use the colloquial term 'oorlé' to describe people who appeared lifeless. In Afrikaans, this term suggests that the person has stopped living and is merely existing. From 1978 until 1994, my mother lived with us at KSB. During her stay, she observed many people at the Mission who she believed were examples of 'oorlé'.

She also used the expression 'crumbs pretending to be cake' to describe people who thought too highly of themselves. I met someone once who embodied my mother's colloquialism. This encounter happened around the time when our fourth child, Ronelle, was learning to walk. Estelle and I took a trip to the West Coast with our daughter while the other children stayed behind. We drove a two-ton Mazda truck as we had to pick up some plants from my father's farm. The vehicle ran on gasoline and was comfortable to drive, albeit quite slow.

We left KSB early in the day with the goal of reaching Britstown in the Karoo by sunset. However, by late afternoon, I was starting to tire as I struggled to get the truck to go above 80 km per hour. While driving through De Aar, I checked the fuel gauge to ensure we had enough to reach Britstown. As we approached the town, a strong headwind developed and suddenly the engine sputtered and died. I was stranded on the side of the road with my wife and baby girl, and the town was not within walking distance. My attempts to flag down passing cars were unsuccessful. Eventually, several trucks stopped and offered to help, but they could only provide us with diesel. We required gasoline, but none of the passing trucks had any.

While searching for a solution, I spotted a farmer working on a windmill about 200 yards away. I approached him and asked if he had any gasoline to sell. He was very unfriendly and asked me to leave him alone before telling me to get off his property. As the sun began to set, I was no closer to finding some gasoline and was hesitant to leave Estelle and our little girl by the side of the road. I realised my only option was to approach the unfriendly farmer again. He had completed his work on the windmill by this time and was loading his tools onto his pick-up truck. I again requested some gasoline, offering to pay him ten times its value. He responded by boasting about his wealth, listing the number of farms and sheep he owned. He made it clear that he did not require my financial offer and had no sympathy for my predicament. Despondently, I began walking back to the truck when he suddenly changed his mind.

Unfortunately, his great wealth did not stop him from taking advantage of the situation and he demanded a huge sum of money for 5 litres of petrol. I paid him what he wanted, and we were able to have the truck running in time to reach Britstown by nightfall. The arrogant farmer had truly been an example of 'crumbs pretending to be cake'.

Years later we happened to be in the same area again helping someone move from the Mission to the Cape. Estelle and I had taken separate vehicles. I was driving a diesel truck and she was in our family saloon. It was a Sunday afternoon when we stopped in a small town near De Aar to refuel. Unfortunately, they had run out of diesel, and it was the only petrol station in town. I decided to go to the police station to see if they could help. They gave me the addresses of several farmers nearby who might be able to help. I started knocking on doors, but none of them seemed to be home. We could have easily helped ourselves, as all the farms had left their diesel tanks unlocked, but I did not feel right taking it without permission. By the time we reached the fourth farm on the list, the truck had run out of fuel and the sun was starting to sink below the horizon.

As we approached the farmhouse, we were relieved to see a family eating a meal inside. I knocked tentatively on the door and heard a man with a booming voice tell me to come in. I went in and greeted the family before explaining my predicament. Before I could finish, he interrupted. He demanded to know why I had left my family outside in the cold night air and ordered me to fetch them. I ducked outside and when I returned with my family, they had already prepared plates for us to eat with them. After we had eaten, he handed me the keys to his pickup truck, with a 20-litre container of diesel in the back and told me to take it. I filled the tank of the truck and drove back to the house. His family must have gotten on well with Estelle and the children because they were in the middle of a lively conversation when I returned. I offered to pay him for the diesel, but he refused to take any money and sent us on our way.

His name was Jopie du Plessis - a name I will never forget. He turned out to be the real deal - not 'crumbs pretending to be cake'. A few years later I had the privilege of preaching in the church where he was an elder.

Every time we drive past his farm on the way to KSB, I think of Oom Jopie and his generosity. God bless him and his family.

32. The Printing Press

It has been said that to reach the rainbow you have to endure the rain - like Joseph in the Bible who had to endure prison before he could become Prime Minister of Egypt. And that has been my experience. Not that I ever became Prime Minister, but the principle was something I had to learn in my life.

In March 1990, I received a call on my secret phone from Military Intelligence Headquarters in Pretoria. They wanted to know if KSB would be interested in a printing press. I had never considered the possibility of installing one at KSB, so I asked the man if I could call him when I had time to consider his offer. I went to Uncle Erlo's house to discuss it with him. According to the information I had been given, it was an elaborate system - two roller presses of the highest quality, a sheet folder and binder, a darkroom, and various other elements. And the only cost to the Mission would be cover the transportation from Windhoek. Erlo and I discussed the offer with the Mamas and their excitement at this "golden opportunity" was palpable.

I immediately called MI headquarters and accepted their offer. They gave me the name of a company in Rundu, Namibia, which dealt with the delivery of heavy machinery. We agreed on a price of R26,000 for the transport and Uncle Erlo gave me a cheque which I immediately deposited. If I remember correctly, the company was called Framatrade.

We started building a suitable room to house the printing press and a few weeks later I received a call from Windhoek saying that the delivery was on its way. Two cream-coloured Scania lorries with cranes arrived at KSB and unloaded their cargo near the old

reception building. We quickly moved the equipment into the room that we had built earlier. I had been instructed by my contact in Pretoria to carefully dismantle the items and remove any serial numbers, army insignia or other identifying marks. I was puzzled by this request and asked my contact in Military Intelligence about it. He informed me that the SA government had donated the printing press to the Namibian government, but that the SA Army felt it would be of better use at KSB. I passed the information on to Uncle Erlo and we began the tedious process of removing all identifying markings from the equipment. The staff at the mission were used to hard work and we soon had the equipment reassembled. Thus, Khanya Press Pty Ltd was born. (*Shining Light Press*)

Despite the questionable circumstances of our acquisition, the whole thing did not bother me, and I had no reason to give it much thought until many years later. One day my neighbour in Klawer asked me what had happened to the press. I was startled by his question because I had not thought about it for years, and I had the impression that only a few select people knew about the press. He went on to tell me that he had been an officer in the SA army and had been stationed in Windhoek for a short time. One of his duties there was to handle security for various buildings used by the army. On one occasion, he had received orders from Pretoria to remove all security measures from a particular print shop in the industrial area of the city. He was told that the printing press was being taken for delivery to a mission station in Zululand. It was his job to ensure that no one became suspicious and upset the proverbial apple cart.

That was not the only interesting piece of information I received regarding the printing press. It must have been around 1999 or 2000 when I received a phone call from Pretoria. Jackie Selebi was the SA Police Commissioner at the time. The man on the phone said he was a major in the Scorpion unit and gave me a number

in Pretoria to call. I dialled the number and a lady answered and told me that I had reached SA Police Headquarters. I asked for the Major whose name I had been given and she transferred the call to his phone. The Major spoke with an English accent and informed me that he was aware of my involvement in the removal of the ex-military printing press in Windhoek. He went on to say that one of the roller presses had been made in Germany and was one of only two of its kind in the whole of Africa. He also informed me that someone had been printing counterfeit US currency - mostly hundred-dollar bills - which had been linked to the German press in question.

Although I was unsure whether he was lying about this last piece of information, I was startled. I stammered my reply, admitting that I had been involved in removing the press from Windhoek and helping to install it at KSB. I assured him that we had never produced counterfeit banknotes during my time at KSB. I also gave him the details of where the printing press was located at the mission and the names of the people who had worked with the machine during my time there.

I never heard anything more about it after that. I am still not entirely sure whether the counterfeit US currency was printed at KSB, but I think it is unlikely. In 2003, media reports began to circulate about a German printing press owned by the SA police that had been used to print counterfeit money in 1999. (*See: <https://www.iol.co.za/news/south-africa/circulation-of-fake-us-dollars-high-in-sa-107230>*)

Sometimes when things seem too good to be true it is because the opportunity is presented by the Devil himself. And isn't an accomplice just as guilty as the thief? Or does this only apply to those outside the Church among those who do not claim the name of Christ?

33. Dirk Mudge

My doubts about my place at KSB continued and I began to consider the possibility of emigrating to Australia with my family. In May 1990 I received a phone call from a stranger in Germany. She introduced herself as Monika and told me that she worked for a Federal Minister called Dr Warnke. She wanted to know if I could travel to Namibia with a message for Dirk Mudge. Mudge was the leader of the opposition in the newly formed Namibian government. I was surprised by the request and asked why she could not contact Mr Mudge herself. She explained that they were concerned about security as the phone lines could be tapped. I was also puzzled as to why they did not send someone from the German Embassy in Windhoek, but she informed me that the staff there had proven to be unreliable and they felt uncomfortable leaving sensitive information in their hands. Still reeling from the fact that a German minister was entrusting me with this task, I asked if I could call her back the following day to give me time to consider the offer. I went to Uncle Erlo to discuss the matter and he immediately gave me his blessing. I called Monika back the next day and agreed to deliver the message on the condition that I could take my wife and children with me and that her government would pay all our travel expenses. She agreed to my terms.

The money came through quickly and Katrin gave me a cheque, which I deposited into my secret account. The mid-year school holidays were approaching, and I informed Uncle Erlo that I would be leaving for Namibia as soon as they started. I also gave him an outline of my itinerary, which included plans to visit many of the churches where I had preached in previous years, including those where the choir had been. This meant that we would be away for a couple of weeks as we had to travel around the country to visit the different churches. Erlo gave me his blessing for the trip. Just before we left, Monika contacted me again with the

message from Dr Warnke, which I was to pass on to Dirk Mudge. But I forgot to inform the Mamas and Lidia about the trip,

Estelle, our five children, and the children's nanny Nomusa Ngubane, piled into the Toyota Hilux that the army had given me, and soon we were on our way. Our first overnight stop was in the Kalahari Park, where the borders of Namibia, Botswana, and South Africa meet. The trip felt different to my usual outreaches because for once I had time on my hands and my whole family with me. The Germans had also been very generous with the funds to cover the trip, so we did not have to worry about costs along the way. We were young and free, and God was good!



Figure 40. Somewhere in the Namib Desert. Nomusa Ngubane, our dear nanny on the left with Steffi.

We stayed with Oubaas and Ria Kotze in Stampriet where I had the opportunity to do some more hunting. The next stop was Okahandja where I preached at the Sunday service. After a few days of relaxation in the Etosha National Park, we arrived in Oshakati, where I preached again the following Sunday. Then we headed west to Kaokoland where we joined Rev. Jakob Schoeman and his family for a camping trip in the Namib Desert. It was a memorable time together. I was also able to contact Mr Mudge's office and book a fifteen-minute appointment with him for the following week.

After a wonderful time travelling in the north of Namibia, we arrived in Windhoek. I dropped Estelle and the children off in the centre of town and went to see Mr Mudge. After the initial introductions and small talk, I turned the conversation to my reason for coming. I had barely begun when he suddenly interrupted and asked if I would like a cup of coffee. He put his finger to his lips and looked up at the ceiling. I knew what he was trying to say, and we left the building and walked to his car. We drove to a local coffee shop - the name of which now escapes me - and found a seat with plenty of privacy. He gave me the all clear to proceed and I relayed the information I had been given. While he listened without interruption, he suddenly changed the subject and asked which side of the Greeff family I was from. He had a son-in-law who was also a Greeff, and we began to compare our family trees to see if there was any connection between the two. His kindness and openness towards me put me at ease, and I soon found myself asking if I could dispense with the formality of calling him "sir" and simply address him as "uncle", as that conveyed far more respect in our culture. He was quite tickled by this and agreed.

After just one conversation, I felt I could trust this man. I found myself opening up about my struggles with the military and the National Party in recent years but did not mention my connection with KSB. I also confided that I was seriously considering leaving South Africa. He responded calmly, with a gentle look.

"I'm glad you've come to this conclusion. You've worked through optimism and pessimism and now you can arrive at realism".

He went on to say that the first two isms were useless, but the last was very important. He turned the conversation to our homeland, saying that the heart of Africa was big enough to include white people. He also shared his belief that the US would become part of Latin America, facing the same problems as Mexico and the rest of South America. He had a similar view of

Australia, insisting that it would be overrun by Asians and increasingly come under the influence of China and the Eastern countries. He then made a personal plea: "Africa needs you, Koos". His words had a profound effect on me.

Throughout the conversation, Uncle Dirk Mudge helped me to connect the dots until a picture began to form in my mind. It felt like the fog in my head was beginning to lift. I was still lost in thought when I reunited with my family and drove to Stampriet. We stayed there for the night before spending the following night at Klipdam - the same farm where we had made our futile search for diamonds.

By the time we got back to KSB, the school holidays were almost over. I went to see Uncle Erlo and he seemed quite pleased with my account of our trip and had nothing negative to say. Later I also went to greet the Mamas. Before I had a chance to tell them about my trip, Lidia suddenly spoke up and rebuked me for my time away from KSB. She told me that my absence for the last three weeks had been an inconvenience because I had not been there to help with the mid-year youth conference. She went on to say that I had also denied my children the blessing they would have received through the services at the conference.

I decided not to respond to her criticism and simply greeted them before leaving. I could not help but wonder what my children and Nomusa would have said if they had been asked what they would rather do: watch Estus Pirkle's 'The Burning Hell' for the umpteenth time and hear about the evils of girls wearing pants to or go on a family adventure where they would experience exquisite scenery, unique cultures and the company of loving family and friends. It became increasingly clear to me that Lidia Dube lived in a world of her own making - a figment of her imagination in which KSB was the glorious mountain against which the rest of the world paled into insignificance.

34. Family

1991 rolled around and my aunt contacted me at the beginning of the year to say that she was organising a family reunion in Strandfontein on the West Coast at the end of the year. She hoped I would be able to attend, so I went to see Uncle Erlo to discuss the possibility of taking some time off. It was the first time since 1977 that I had asked for leave for the Christmas holidays. As the months went by and the date of the family reunion approached, the calls and letters continued as we coordinated the final logistics.



Figure 41. Our team on the European tour of June 1986.

In November I reminded Uncle Erlo and the Mamas that I was taking some time off and asked if it would be all right for us to leave after the youth conference in early December. They all agreed, and I planned to arrive on the West Coast on the 17th of December. But first I had to make a detour to Lichtenburg in the Western Transvaal, as I had organised some meetings there. We were all excited at the prospect of spending our first Christmas

with my family. Estelle set about buying personalised presents for each member of my family including my grandma. I serviced the Cressida and we took great care to pack everything we needed for the trip.

On the morning of 16 December, I was sitting in the kitchen at Koos and Santa Snyman's farm in Lichtenburg when the phone rang. The call was from KSB. To my shock, I was told that they were organising conferences in Europe and that the leadership felt that I should be part of the preaching team. Since I had given them plenty of notice about my upcoming family reunion, I was not happy that they were suddenly trying to send me to Europe. I reminded them of my plans, but all my protests seemed to fall on deaf ears. When I spoke to my father-in-law that afternoon, he told me in no uncertain terms that I was expected to do the job because that was what the KSB leadership had decided. I was to return to KSB immediately as they had already booked me on a flight to Zurich on the 25th.

What was I to do? I loved my wife and respected my father-in-law, but what about my family reunion? I could rebel openly, but then what? I had no choice but to call my father with the bad news. To soften the blow, I told him that I was needed to preach at the meetings because some of the other workers were ill and it was a great honour to be asked to stand in for them. My father told me years later that the family reunion had been somewhat marred by my absence. "What on earth happened to Koos?" was the question that my extended family kept asking.



Figure 42. Me helping in the kitchen during our visit to France.

I boarded my flight to Europe with a heavy heart, still unhappy about the sudden change of plans. As it was Christmas Day, the plane was almost empty. I spent a long time reading my Bible and praying, trying to put myself in a better frame of mind. I had been asked to preach and that was all there was to it. I just had to submit and accept.

The meetings lasted until the evening of 20 January. Alpheus Mdlalose preached the final service, taking the story of David and Goliath as his text. The sermon proved to be a blessing to me as it seemed relevant to the circumstances in which I found myself. I woke up early the following morning and felt that the Lord was trying to tell me something. I re-read the story of David in its entirety and was struck by the fact that David's initial responsibility was the rather menial task of delivering food from his father to his brothers at the front. His simple questions to his brothers also landed him in trouble, much like mine had. From that humble beginning, David went on to fight in battle and defeated Goliath. The Lord seemed to be saying that I had been carrying the burdens of others for long enough and that I should not worry if people reacted with hostility to my questions.

I suddenly realised that I would be fighting my own battles from now on and that my days with KSB were over. The next day my mind was still racing as I tried to identify what I no longer agreed with at KSB and how to deal with the opposition of others. I also began to think about what my calling might be outside the context of the Mission and what battles I might have to fight on my own in the future. My days of doing the bidding of others and dealing with their criticism were coming to an end. I was sure of that.

In February 1992, Estelle and I travelled to the Cape Province for another series of meetings. The main choir was also there, but we left a few days earlier to visit my father in Strandfontein. Estelle and I took a long walk along the beach one morning and I took the opportunity to share with her my concerns and questions about KSB. I also shared my desire to leave the Mission so that we could start a new chapter in our lives as a family.

She listened quietly, looking at me with her sparkling blue eyes. I went on to explain the many disagreements I had had with Uncle Erlo and Lidia. It seemed that the God represented by the leadership of KSB was capricious and arbitrary. I had always tried to plan things meticulously, making sure that I communicated my intentions to the leaders, but they had not reciprocated, making unilateral decisions without consulting me. The God I knew had always been a God of order. The same God who made the sun rise and set with regularity. In contrast, the behaviour of the KSB leadership was becoming increasingly impossible to predict as there was no rhyme or reason for it.

Estelle looked at me intensely as I spoke, but I sensed that she was grateful that I had shared what was on my heart.

35. Antwerp

I made two trips to Europe to preach on behalf of KSB. Although things have changed dramatically in the last 70 years, there is one

problem I still have with Europe's history: its colonialism and oppression. Whenever I visited a beautiful cathedral or admired the artifacts in a museum there was always the question at the back of my mind: where did the money or these artifacts come from originally? Were the items stolen? And was the money swindled away from some unsuspecting soul who donated his wealth to reduce his time in purgatory? At times I even felt anger as I contemplated the unnecessarily extravagant use of gold and silver to decorate a stupid cathedral. And for what? To impress an ignorant tourist? That is my opinion on the subject anyway.

Belgium ranks near the top when it comes to having used spiritual deception and colonial imperialism over the past few centuries. During one of our tours of Europe, Papa and Mama Stegen, Alpheus Mdlalose and I made up the team. Our destination was the Belgian city of Antwerp. We arrived during the week and, if I recall correctly, we only held one or two meetings there. Our hosts were very kind, and when they heard that I had a deep love of history, they offered to take me to the Antwerp Cathedral and the small museum located nearby. I was also able to see the statue of Silvius Brabo - the hero who cut off the hand of the giant who was oppressing the people in that area. Rumour has it that the giant cut off the hand of anyone who could not afford to pay to cross the river in his boat. One day a young Roman soldier called Silvius Brabo had had enough and challenged him to a fight. Against all odds, Silvius prevailed and cut off the giant's hand. This is how the place was named "hand-throwing" or Antwerp.

I was impressed, and spent hours looking, reading, and thinking about Silvius Brabo – the man who challenged the giant. Later that afternoon, I made my way to a tall building which my host had pointed out to me earlier. I had arranged to meet him there, but as I was running a little late, I did not take the path he had shown me but chose a more direct path towards the building. It

was cold and wet as the sunlight started to fade, so I wrapped my coat around me more tightly. On the street in front of me, a BMW was parked on the side of the road and as I approached it a lovely lady in a mink coat got out and approached me. She greeted me warmly and asked me if I was lost or looking for something. I was quite impressed by her friendliness but explained that I was perfectly fine and was on my way to the building in the distance.

As I continued on my way, I passed a restaurant with dimly lit windows. Inside I could see a beautiful waitress sitting quietly at a small table near the window. Considering how cold it was, I was amazed to see how lightly she was dressed. However, as I looked around the room, I noticed a fireplace being used to heat the room which was painted red. I kept walking, and more people greeted me and asked if they could help me. The friendliness made me feel like I was back home in Namaqualand, but I politely declined their invitation and kept going.

Over dinner that evening, I told everyone at the table about my wonderful day and the impressive statue of Silvius Brabo. I also mentioned that the people of Antwerp were remarkably friendly, and I told them about my experiences that afternoon. It was only then that I discovered that I had actually been walking through a red-light district known for its prostitution.

I learned that day that we can unknowingly take a shortcut to reach our ultimate goal, but sometimes the way that seems easiest can take us right through the devil's den!

36. Lynne and John

In 1978, I took several photos of the Mission and the surrounding areas, which I later turned into postcards at Art Publishers in Durban. This little side hustle helped Estelle and I stay afloat financially. We expanded the idea by printing airmail letters,

which consisted of a thin A4 sheet that you folded three times and glued shut. Our magnum opus was designing a letter template which included photos of the Mission and a unique logo. It provided us with a supply of stationery that served as a form of advertising for KSB. I discussed the logo idea with Uncle Erlo, and he responded positively. He even suggested an idea that he felt represented what KSB was about - a shady tree along a desert road where weary traveller can rest. I liked the idea and asked my friend from Bloemfontein, to design the logo. Her design later became the official logo of KSB. Having an extra source of income proved to be a lifesaver in the times when money was scarce. Despite some of these challenges, we were content as we believed we were fulfilling our calling.

In June 1993, while staying up north with Tom and Lanie Fouche, we received news of another scandal at KSB. Apparently, Uncle Manfred had rebelled against his brother and allowed his daughter Lynne to become engaged to someone who did not meet Erlo's approval. As a result, the phone began ringing constantly with people enquiring what should be done about it. I did my best to reassure them that when Erlo returned from overseas, he would undoubtedly resolve the issue. I was familiar with Manfred's family and had also been in regular contact with Lynne's fiancé, John Giessing. John was a dedicated Christian and studying to become a doctor. I met him through his leadership role in a student group in Pretoria.

Prior to Erlo's return from overseas, I delivered a sermon at KSB using Genesis 14 as my text. I discussed how Lot's impulsive decision led his entire family into captivity and how Abram, the true man of God, came to their rescue. In my sermon, I encouraged everyone to remain calm as our own "man of God" would soon return. However, the situation was difficult for me as I respected both Erlo and Manfred and had participated in outreaches with both of them.

When Erlo returned, we immediately held a co-workers' meeting in the 'upper room' to hear what our own man of God had to say. He launched a scathing attack on Manfred, accusing him of rebellion. He then criticised John for being a member of the Reformed Church and for refusing to resign from that "lost" denomination. Erlo stated that God had liberated us from the darkness of other churches through the enlightenment of the revival. He expressed his reluctance to allow his niece to join the ranks of these false churches.

Erlo then shifted his focus to the loyalty of the co-workers. Many of us had to publicly declare whether we sided with KSB or the churches Erlo had denounced. The meeting finally ended at 2am. I had kept quiet throughout the whole meeting. I could not let Erlo's ridiculous display go unchallenged, so I went to see my parents-in-law. They were still awake, as Friedel had also attended the meeting.

I explained to them that KSB was no longer a shady refuge for weary travellers but had turned into a squatter camp. KSB had become consumed by a spiritual elitism that sought to distance us from other Christians rather than encouraging fellow believers and working towards our common goal of building the church of Christ. Somewhere along the way, we had lost sight of our true calling. The shady tree, which was meant to provide spiritual refreshment, had withered away.

Papa did not respond, but I could tell that they were both beginning to view me as a lost cause. Over the following weeks, regular meetings with the co-workers continued, and I attempted to express my concerns. However, I soon realised that my colleagues did not share my views, and their arrogant responses were shocking. It became increasingly clear that my time at KSB was limited.

I remembered my prayer from the day I arrived at KSB in my Fiat back in 1977: 'Lord, your Word says that people will come from the East and the West. As the first Afrikaans-speaking person to join this work, I came from the West. However, please grant me the grace to be the first to leave this place when your Spirit departs.' I know it probably sounds a little holier-than-thou, but that was my simple, childlike prayer at the time.

It had been over eighteen months since the Lord had spoken to me in Germany. During this time, I expressed my concerns to Erlo, my parents-in-law, the Mamas, and Estelle. I had also ceased my involvement with Military Intelligence and transferred the leadership of KSB's security teams to Jannie le Roux. However, I was still on the board of Lungisa Mining and CFT. I realised it was time to act on my concerns and repeatedly sought permission from Erlo and the Mamas to explain my intentions of leaving KSB with the other co-workers. Each time, my request was denied.

37. Final Days at KSB

When I was younger, I was known, at times, for my confrontational language. However, I am actually quite averse to conflict, and even within my own family I am not known as the fighter. My intention was to leave KSB on the most amicable terms possible, without causing any unnecessary tension. *(Since then, I have learned that this is an impossible task when dealing with a sectarian high control group.)*

I first made an appointment with Erlo and calmly discussed the matter with him. I avoided mentioning my belief that KSB was declining like a dying tree, as I suspected he would not take it very well. I shared my story, starting with the day the Lord had called me into ministry on Christmas Day in 1976. I also reminded Erlo that when I joined as a co-worker, I had informed him that I would only be there until I felt my calling was elsewhere. I had also

mentioned this fact to him when Estelle accepted my proposal and she asked about my future plans. I had explained that I was following the Lord's guidance and although I was currently called to KSB, I believed that the Lord would lead me elsewhere in the future.

Uncle Erlo did not seem to remember this. When I shared with him about how the Lord had spoken to me in Germany the previous year, he interrupted me. He told me I was confused because God does not communicate that way. When I said God had been speaking to me like that for 17 years, he got angry and started challenging me. To avoid an argument, I changed the subject and explained that I was examining my own motives to ensure that I was not harbouring any jealousy, bitterness or unforgiveness towards any co-workers. I also mentioned that I still had concerns regarding the Major, Muzi Kunene, and Lidia Dube.

When I mentioned their names, Erlo became angry and suddenly leapt up from the bed he had been laying on during our conversation. His blue eyes were flashing as he yelled, 'So, you still have issues with the co-workers and the Mamas too?' I instinctively jumped up as well, as his body language suggested he wanted to attack me. Although he was slightly taller and heavier than me, I was twenty years younger and in good physical condition. I was prepared to defend myself if necessary. After a few moments of staring at each other, I defused the situation by suggesting that we just forget about it. We spoke for a few more minutes but it was clear that I would get nowhere with Erlo. I said an abrupt goodbye and walked out.

The Christmas morning service took place a few days later. That morning, I approached Erlo as he was leaving the auditorium and quietly informed him that I was resigning as a co-worker, effective immediately. He simply responded with an 'oh' and continued walking. A short time later, I travelled to Western Transvaal and

the Karoo for preaching appointments, accompanied by Estelle and the children. We stayed on a farm near Middelburg in the Karoo and took some time to climb the nearby Buffelskop mountain. Upon reaching the summit, I informed the children that we would be leaving KSB. We engraved our initials on a large rock and made a vow to serve the Lord faithfully for the remainder of our lives.



Figure 43. The evening after I resigned. I was still in shock.

Upon our return to KSB shortly after New Year's Day, I discovered that news of my resignation had caused quite a stir. My colleagues questioned and harassed Estelle so much that she began to have doubts and was eventually influenced by them to reject my decision to leave. This was the first time we experienced real difficulties in our marriage as they turned her against me. However, God gave me clear guidance about the situation while reading a part of Moses' story again. He was also forced to leave his wife behind to return to Egypt to rescue the Israelites. I was confident that I had to carry on with my plan to leave, and Estelle would join me later. I asked her if she was happy for me to proceed and see what doors the Lord opened for us. I promised to have an honest discussion with her so that she could

make her own decision. She agreed, and our marriage was restored.

I decided to leave on the morning of January 10th. A friend from Cape Town, Leroi du Plessis, was travelling back to the Cape and had offered to give me a ride. On the evening of the 9th, the co-workers called a meeting and asked me to explain my decision to leave. Once again, the discussion lasted for hours as the co-workers berated me for my decision.

Fano Sibisi's comment stood out to me. He said he could not accept my departure from KSB as God's will because I hadn't received instructions from the Mamas to do so. After everyone had spoken, I responded by addressing Fano's comment directly. I informed him about how God had guided me before I arrived at KSB. At the age of twenty-one, I obeyed God's voice and left my family farm long before I met the Mamas. Likewise, a few months later, I left my theological studies to follow God's guidance to KSB, arriving uninvited. Even when I asked Estelle to pray about marrying me, I did it on my own. Even they had to acknowledge that God had led me to KSB. I asked the group why, after seventeen years, I needed the Mamas to act as intermediaries between God and myself. Did this mean I had regressed from being a mature Christian to a child in the faith? No one had a response to this.

The following morning, I left KSB without my family. But I had a firm belief that Estelle and the children would follow me. I was also confident that, like in Moses' case, my in-laws would eventually join me as well.

38. Reforming the World

In November 1993, I preached my final sermon at KSB. I had known for some time that my days at the Mission were numbered

and that my attempts to leave as peacefully as possible might be in vain. This sermon held a special significance as it seemed like it would be my last. I have a habit of systematically working my way through the Bible, often spending days or even weeks on a specific chapter. I also like to study various translations and commentaries on a given passage. During this time, I was studying Genesis chapter 18, where Abraham negotiates with God regarding the fate of Sodom.

The story takes place in Mamre, where Abraham chose to live and encountered the presence of the Lord. While residing there, God promised that he would have a son who would be the forefather of kings and princes. Abraham led a simple life, minding his own business and helping strangers who passed by. However, he was considered a friend by God and received special promises as a result.

In contrast, Lot chose a more luxurious lifestyle, working as a ruler or judge in the courts of Sodom. He held a position of power and influence, according to the world's standards. By contrast, Abraham's success was measured differently. However, the story ends in tragedy as Lot loses everything including his wife and two sons-in-law. Furthermore, his descendants are cursed for ten generations.

This narrative illustrates a spiritual principle that remains relevant today. Whenever the Christian church attempts to reform the world through human effort and positions of power, they inevitably fail. The consequences are always the same: losing the blessing of God, the next generation going astray, and the church being influenced by the world they aim to reform. Vivid examples of this can be seen in the German churches during Hitler's regime or the Afrikaans churches during Apartheid. They succumbed to tyrannical political power even though they aimed to influence the world in a positive way.

Genesis 18 concludes with Abraham pleading with God to spare Sodom if ten righteous people are found within its walls. It is noteworthy that Jewish synagogues consisted of ten people. Essentially, Abraham is requesting mercy if even one small synagogue still exists in Sodom. To translate it into our modern context - if God could find one small house church or Bible study within the city, He would show grace and withhold judgment. Could Lot, his wife, and two daughters not persuade even six others to form a synagogue with them? Did they have so little influence on their friends, servants, neighbours and even Lot's soon to be sons-in-law? This is even more surprising when you consider Lot's position of influence within the city.

During my sermon to the members of KSB, I urged them to choose a humble and unremarkable life spent in the presence of God, rather than seeking important positions that are esteemed by the world. This is what I believe is the Biblical method of generating true reform within our culture.

However, my sermon was not well received by everyone. Some of the CFT board members approached me with concerns about my message. Alpheus Mdlalose acted as the spokesperson and reprimanded me for my words. He believed my words were not aligned with the goals of CFT, and as the organisation's vice president, I was undermining their mission.

I was surprised as I had not intended my sermon to be in reference to CFT and had not prepared it with them in mind. I chose not to respond to Alpheus. My mind was already made up - I was going to follow the path of Abraham.

Upon reflecting on the origins of CFT and its impact on the people at the Mission, I am convinced that the entire endeavour was a deception from the start. It is clear that the devil misled the leadership of KSB and the congregants who followed them blindly.



Figure 44. Our house at KSB. When we left, we still owed a lot on it.

39. To the Cape Peninsula

After I resigned, my friends in Cape Town prepared for my arrival. Several pastors had organised a Bible school and had appointed me as the principal. When I arrived on the evening of the 10th, a small room in the Parow South Dutch Reformed Church had been prepared for me to live in. A few days later, I held my first class. The institution was called El Roi Bible School, and its first students were Japie Vermeulen, Herman de la Querre, Johan van der Merwe, Pieter van Vuuren, Neil Jacobs, Walter Claasen, and a man named Jakov whose last name I cannot recall. Regrettably, the turmoil of departing from KSB was not yet resolved. Mission co-workers bombarded me with calls and faxes, and even went so far as cautioning people against working with me. Fortunately, the pastors in the Cape ignored this and I started receiving a steady stream of preaching requests.



Figure 45. The first students. 1994.

After three weeks, I had the opportunity to take the weekend off and flew to Durban where Estelle and the children were eagerly waiting for me at Louis Botha airport. The weather was beautiful. The next day was sports day at Domino Servite and some of my children were also participating. I attended the event and saw Uncle Erlo watching his daughter do the long jump. I walked over and after we exchanged greetings, he asked me how things were going. I shared about my preaching opportunities, the Bible School I was leading, and the students I was teaching. He then asked me how Estelle was doing, and I mentioned that I was grateful for her support and her excitement about what the Lord was doing for me in my new job.

After returning to Cape Town on Sunday evening, I resumed my work. The following Tuesday, Estelle called me in tears, asking what I had said to Uncle Erlo. I explained what we had discussed. "Now I understand the problem," she said. After I had left KSB, she had received the silent treatment from her co-workers. We prayed together on the phone and continued with our responsibilities. A few days later, she called me again. She was crying again and told me that she could not take it anymore. She asked me to come and fetch her immediately as she did not want

to stay at KSB any longer. I explained that there was no room for her and the children in my current accommodation, but she was desperate. She was not concerned about living arrangements and said she would be willing to live in a tent, if necessary, as long as it was away from KSB.

I returned to the Mission the following Friday and began packing our belongings the next day. The students from my Bible School were on holiday at that time and kindly joined me a few days later to assist. Albert van Rensburg, a friend of ours, brought his truck, and by the time it arrived, everything in our house was packed and ready. We departed KSB just before the Easter weekend in 1994. After the truck left, we stayed behind for a few minutes to bid farewell to Uncle Erlo and the Mamas. He was Estelle's uncle, after all, and we had both worked at the Mission for many years. As he said goodbye, he warned that I was turning my back on God and that Satan was waiting for me outside the gates of KSB. I asked him if this was the same prophetic spirit that had told him to invest in the diamond mine venture at Klipdam years ago? He was taken aback by my pointed question and stared at me silently.

As we left through the gate, I stopped the car and prayed with my family. The children sat quietly in the back of the Cressida, apprehensive about the unknown future that lay ahead of us. At the time, I had an overdraft of nearly R10,000 at the ABSA branch in Greytown and no savings. I had no idea how we would make it to Cape Town. Just before the truck left the Mission, Carlo Stegen arrived and gave me a cheque for R7,500 - a gift from his father, Uncle Bodo. Upon arriving in Greytown, I noticed Uncle Manfred's silver Mercedes parked on the main road. His son Jimmy signalled for us to pull over. Uncle Manfred and his wife approached our car and offered us their prayers. As we bid farewell, he discreetly placed a cheque for R10,000 in my shirt pocket. I immediately went to the bank and settled the account. We had enough left over to make the trip to Cape Town. We dined

at a local restaurant and stayed overnight at the 'Little Switzerland Resort' in Drakensberg. We arrived in Cape Town the following day and moved into an apartment in Somerset West, generously provided by Johan and Linda Grobbelaar. After years of financial struggle, donations began pouring in from all over.

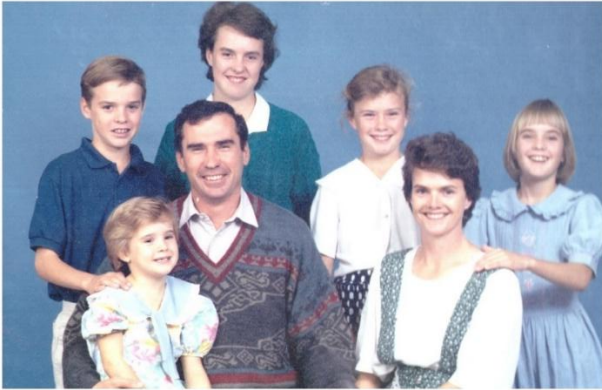


Figure 46. Shortly after we arrived in the Cape. We were free!

However, the drama with KSB was far from over. They decided to dispute the ownership of our house. In 1987, we had sought to build a house and our friends organised the 'Build-a-House-for-Koos Fund'. With the donations we received, we were able to put down a deposit on a new home. We took out a mortgage to cover the remaining costs, and by June 1989, we were living in our new home. The Mission contributed by donating sand, cement, and some tiles for the foundations and floors. However, we paid for the rest ourselves. Although we had left KSB, we still owed a significant amount of money on the house. The Mission's leadership declined to purchase the property from us or settle the remaining debt.

Fano Sibisi and his family moved into the house, but it took us years to pay it off. The Mission's lack of cooperation seemed odd, given that Estelle and I had worked at KSB for 17 and 19 years

respectively without pay. Perhaps one day we will hear the reason why the leadership declined to contribute.

Despite these obstacles, we were grateful to be free and starting a new chapter where we could leave the nightmarish days of KSB behind us.

40. In the Cape Peninsula

The eighteen months we spent living in the Cape Peninsula were a happy time. We moved from Somerset West to Parow, staying in a house on Gardiner Street in Parow owned by Jan Mouton. It was the first time that Estelle was able to experience freedom away from the oppressive restrictions imposed at KSB. She took full advantage and spent countless hours at the municipal library. We bought a TV and VCR for the first time, and Estelle enjoyed borrowing movies to watch at home. At the Mission, watching TV was prohibited, so we had a lot of catching up to do. Monika stayed at KSB to finish tenth grade, but she joined us at the end of the year. 1994 was a year of change, not only for our family but also for the country. Nelson Mandela won the election and became president. As this new chapter in South African history unfolded, everyone seemed on edge. However, our fears were allayed when the new president also spoke in Afrikaans during his first parliamentary speech and pleaded for reconciliation.

By the end of the year, our family had settled into a new routine. Estelle was enjoying her newfound freedom, Monika (or Mons, as we call her) had come home, and the other children were doing well at school. We also had the opportunity to spend Christmas at our family farm "Begin" with my brother. During our two-week stay, we decided to have a braai on a beautiful Sunday afternoon. I suggested the steel bridge on the Doring River in the district of Klaver as a suitable location for our excursion. It was a secluded spot, where there were seldom many people. Nico

attached a rope to the steel bridge for the kids to swing on while we got the fire started. Later that afternoon, I walked along the river and sat on a rock near the retaining wall. The stunning Nardouws mountains surrounded me, and I could not help but offer a spontaneous prayer to God. I dedicated my life to serving Him and requested that He relocate us to this area. I did not enjoy living in the city, and our part of Parow was infamous for the two B's - beggars and Boeings. The planes roared overhead day and night, and we frequently had people knocking on our door asking for money and food.



Figure 47. Estelle on the day she turned 50.

The Bible school courses resumed after the Christmas holidays. This time, two women enrolled for the first time. The invitations to preach started pouring in again, making it a busy start to the year. We also received a visit from Christo and Marinda de Wet, our friends from Villiersdorp. At one point, Christo asked if we could go somewhere private as he had something to discuss with me. We took a walk around Parow North while he shared his

thoughts. He mentioned that his income tax had increased significantly, and he planned to invest in a farm to reduce his taxable profit. He asked if I would be interested in moving to a farm once he acquired one. He and Marinda were concerned about us living in the city long-term.

I appreciated his offer and concern, but I decided not to make any hasty decisions. I encouraged him to seek professional financial advice before making the purchase. That would give me enough time to pray about his offer without rushing into anything. Over the next few months, Christo looked at various farms and occasionally updated me about them. I trusted him to handle the matter, so much so that I forgot about my prayer beside the Doring River.

One day in May, I received a call from Marinda. She asked if we could meet her and Christo on Friday the 19th at 4pm and invited us to spend the weekend with them. Upon arrival, Christo requested that I accompany him to visit his father in the Vygeboom area of Grabouw. His father, older brother, and a lawyer from Paarl were waiting for us. The De Wet family had decided to purchase a large, undeveloped farm together with Christo. To my surprise, they wanted to gift a portion of the farm to me. I was amazed to learn that I would receive full ownership of the property at no cost. My astonishment grew even more when I found out that the farm was located on the Doring River in the Klaver district, which was the exact location I had prayed for beside the river. Although I wanted to shout 'hallelujah!', I managed to contain myself. After signing the contracts, we became the proud owners of the "De Brug" farm. This was even more remarkable because no one, not even Estelle, knew about my prayer. God had heard and answered, despite the simplicity of my childlike prayer and the fact that I did not even close my eyes or go on my knees!

The following week, we drove into Klawer to search for rental properties near our newly acquired farm. We had arranged a meeting with Eli Maritz, a respected member of the community and the principal of the local primary school. If anyone could guide us in finding rental properties, it was him. We were not disappointed. He provided us with details about a large house that was available. I then asked about schooling for our youngest daughters. At KSB, we were conditioned to fear sex education and other perceived evils in government schools. Uncle Eli responded calmly and put me at ease by informing me that he and my youngest uncle were old school friends. He explained the importance of sex education in addressing prevalent social issues in the community. However, he also reassured me that he would personally oversee the sex education classes and that his Christian values would guide the instruction. I listened silently.

We signed the contract for the rental house and PO Box 62 became ours. We drove back to Cape Town that afternoon and spent the next few weeks packing. Exactly a month later, the car was loaded, and we were on our way.

41. Move to Klawer

In June 1995, we moved from Parow to Klawer. Six of my students helped us with the move, so our convoy of vehicles turned into a long one. We felt excited to leave the city life behind. Albert van Rensburg kindly offered his services again and transported our furniture for us. Some of the students drove their own vehicles, so our children rode with them while Estelle and I had the minibus to ourselves. Despite preaching in many different churches, I had never found one in the Cape where we felt comfortable settling as a family. Belonging to a church family is important, even when travelling for ministry. It is like staying in hotels or camping in various locations without having a

permanent home - not ideal for families. Estelle remained apprehensive around church people, especially those in leadership positions, due to our experiences at KSB.

As we approached Citrusdal, she asked me what we were going to do about finding a church. I was grateful that the Lord gave me grace and wisdom in responding. I told Estelle that we did not require the church to survive spiritually as we knew the Lord and the path He had chosen for us. However, we did need Christian community, not only for ourselves but also for our children. I explained that I had decided to return to the Dutch Reformed Church and told her she was free to join me. Estelle agreed, but only on the condition that if there was any conflict within the church or people who tried to manipulate her, it would be the last time she set foot in a church. I agreed to her terms, and we decided to try the Dutch Reformed Church in Klawer.

Shortly before sunset, our six-vehicle convoy stopped on Klawer's main street where Nico and Renee were waiting for us with a group of people who had come to help. Within a few hours, the truck had been unloaded and Albert headed back to Citrusdal. The rest of us continued to 'Begin' where Nico and Renee had prepared food and organised accommodation for everyone to stay overnight. By the following afternoon, our new home was almost organised when Reverend Marcel Vosloo suddenly walked in unannounced. He was the pastor of the Dutch Reformed Church, which Estelle and I had discussed attending. He politely introduced himself and greeted each of us in person, as it was the first time we had met. After the introductions and small talk, he informed me that he had visited KSB once but this was during the time when Estelle and I were in Namibia. He asked if I would be willing to preach at the church service the following Sunday. He did not inquire about our plans or mention church membership. He simply opened his heart and his congregation to us, making us feel welcome.

As the days went by, some local children started showing up. Our children quickly made friends and were soon riding their bicycles all over Klawer. Shortly after our arrival, they informed me that they had joined a local Christian youth organisation. In no time, they were participating in everything our new hometown had to offer, including joining the local tennis and rugby clubs. Finally, we had found a place that felt like home.

A few days later, a beautiful woman named Patricia Lubbe knocked on our door and welcomed us to the town. Her husband Gerhard was a doctor and she asked if Monika would be interested in working for them as an assistant. We soon became friends with Patricia and Gerhard. Klawer might be a backward town but it has a heart of gold. Klawer is also the reason Estelle and I are still part of the Dutch Reformed Church and why I am an ordained minister in that denomination.

The next step was to start working at the De Brug farm, which was completely undeveloped and even lacked an access road. Although there was a place to join up with a district road near the bridge, it was blocked by large boulders. Initially, I felt overwhelmed and uncertain about where to begin. Fortunately, Uncle Manfred and his wife happened to visit at that time. He reassured me that since the Lord led us here, He would see it through to the end. A few days later, Pieter de Wet contacted me to request permission to install a pump on our property's retaining wall. In exchange, he offered to construct a road that both parties could use. I agreed and offered to build the road myself if he provided the necessary machinery. A Caterpillar bulldozer and two big tractors arrived a few days later. Within a month, we had built a road and cleared a section of our property to construct a house. However, our lack of finances prevented us from proceeding further.



Figure 48. Building the road to the house.

During the winter holiday, while we were gathered in the lounge room for family prayer, someone knocked on the front door. I found Heidi, Uncle Manfred's daughter, asking where her father could park. We all rushed out of the house to find Manfred driving a large Mercedes truck with a trailer full of building materials, ranging from timber to insulation boards. Without any solicitation on our part, Manfred had provided the supplies we needed. Before long, the construction on our house was underway.



Figure 49. Unloading the building materials that Manfred brought.

42. Persecution from KSB

As a couple, we finally felt settled, content, and secure. Estelle pursued her studies through UNISA (*University of South Africa*), and later I followed suit. We were welcomed into different churches, where I was asked to lead Bible school classes in addition to taking one morning and one evening service every month at our local congregation. During that period, Jacob Schoeman from Kaokoland invited me to preach at an Easter conference in northern Namibia. Soon, further opportunities became available Namibia due to the connections we formed there.

Towards the end of 1995, I began to feel guilty about my involvement in Military Intelligence and my contribution to the militarisation of KSB. I wrote a 26-page letter to Uncle Erlo and included copies of reports and letters that I had sent to Military Intelligence during my time at KSB. In the letter, I apologised to him and offered to come to the Mission to publicly ask the congregation for forgiveness. The letter and various copies were certified at the South African Police in Klawer and sent via registered mail to Erlo Stegen personally. However, I never received a response. I also sent an abridged version to my father-in-law.

In December 1995, we visited KSB to celebrate my 40th birthday and to see Estelle's family. On Christmas Day, Friedel asked to speak to me about the letter. He claimed that I had been completely deceived and that even my repentance was not from God but from the devil. He further stated that the Lord's Spirit had abandoned me and that only sorrow and ruin awaited me and my family. After speaking for almost two hours without interruption, he finally allowed me to respond. I asked him about the diamond mine venture and orchard farm at Klipdam, but he had no answer. That was the end of our discussion.

Over time, we grew emotionally distant from KSB and continued our peaceful lives at De Brug. In 1997, I enrolled in a postgraduate diploma in theology at Stellenbosch University and was required to spend a few hours on campus each month. Several congregations from Olifants River Valley started Radio Namaqualand and nominated me as a board member. For five years, I hosted the program 'Spotlight on Missions' every Sunday morning. In 2000, I completed my post-graduate diploma and began a master's degree in dogmatic theology at the same university. My daughters were also doing well. Annemarie was the head prefect of the high school in Vredendal, and Steffi held the same position at her primary school in Klawer.

In late 1999, I became aware of an article in 'Femina' magazine written by Erika Bornmann. She shared her childhood experiences at KSB, and they were truly heartbreaking. I had known Erika since she was a child, and I contacted the magazine to request that they pass my number on to her. She called me, and I had the opportunity to express my condolences for everything she had endured at the hands of the teachers and co-workers at KSB. Although she did not mention me in the article, I wanted to apologise for what happened to her at the Mission. After all, I was a grownup, and she was the child of my friend.

During my final exams that year, I arrived home late one Friday afternoon when the phone rang. Tobie Vermaak was on the other end and bluntly asked me what I had done. I was taken aback and asked him what he was referring to. His tone was aggressive as he accused me of exposing KSB's dealings with Military Intelligence to the media. Before I could respond to his accusation, he abruptly hung up the phone. A short time later, a reporter from Durban called with questions about the Mission's connection to Military Intelligence. Still in shock, I asked her to call back later. Before I could process the situation, I received two more calls from reporters. We were all stunned, trying to understand how the media had learned about my story. My conversation with Erika was private, and I did not mention my military involvement to her. And the letters I had sent to Erlo and Friedel about my military involvement had been posted in 1995 - four years ago. I had never discussed my story with anyone in the media. Due to my distance from Natal, I was unaware of a storm brewing in the press in KZN.

We kept trying to piece things together for the next few months. On the evening of February 8th, 2000, I received another call from someone named Themba. He spoke broken English and threatened to harm my daughters because I had allegedly damaged the reputation of the Mission. These threatening phone

calls occurred two more times, leaving me completely shaken. After the first call, I immediately contacted Reverend Marcel Vosloo for assistance. He arrived a short time later with the commanding officer of the Klaver police station and the chief detective. They installed a tracking device on the phone in my office to trace incoming calls. Additionally, I was provided with a two-way radio to contact the Klaver police at any time of the day.

After a few days, the calls were traced to a gas station near Tobie's home in Centurion. The police found CCTV footage from the gas station and analysed it in Pretoria. They provided a description of the person making the threatening calls, his three accomplices, and the vehicle they were driving. I contacted a friend of mine who was a Special Forces officer in Pretoria, and he made a friendly visit to Tobie's house. He reported meeting Lidia Dube, Dietmar Joosten, and an unidentified black man together at Tobie's residence. I then called my father-in-law to inform him that I had evidence of who was involved in the threats and that I was willing to press charges if the calls continued. I also assured him that I had not been involved with the media or the stories that had been circulating.

I never received another threatening call from 'Themba' again. However, KSB made a deliberate attempt to tarnish my family's reputation. Their smear campaign caused a significant drop in our donations - almost seventy percent within three months. This financial setback forced us to close the Bible school.

(P.S. In January 2017, Jacana Media published the autobiography of Ronnie Kasrils under the name: "A Simple Man: Kasrils and the Zuma Enigma." Ronnie was the Minister of Intelligence Services between 2004 and 2008. In his book, he names me specifically as working for the SADF Military Intelligence. But more importantly he tells the story of Muzi Kunene, who was working for the ANC whilst at KSB and relates how Muzi was instructed to keep an eye on me. This is the same Muzi who was married to the sister of

Lidia Dube and who later murdered somebody. I have confirmation that Muzi had personal contact with at least one of the reporters who reached out to me. Until today, Lidia Dube and the co-workers at KSB believe the lie that it was me that contacted the media back in 1999.)



Figure 50. The students of 1996 at De Brug

43. Building at De Brug

The old Lister generator gifted to us by our friend, Toit Conradie, greatly aided our work on the farm. To add to his generosity, he also provided us with a Massey Ferguson tractor. After the holidays, the Bible school students returned and offered to postpone their usual afternoon classes to help us build. We used the tractor to smooth out the surface of the road we had put in and made the final preparations to lay the foundation at the building site. Donations started pouring in as soon as the construction work began. In the mornings, the students gathered in a shady spot next to a large boulder where I led devotions and held classes until lunchtime. In the afternoons, we worked on the construction site. The students were accustomed to working hard and were eager to help. Wim, a civil engineer, and Thys, an

electrician, were part of the group and contributed their expertise to the construction of our house.



Figure 51. Japie Vermeulen compacting the soil for the main house.

Once the walls were erected, I sent another student, Corné Vredendal, to purchase a 1m x 1m piece of marble. I was perched on the wall above the back entrance when he returned with Hilux pickup loaded to the hilt with marble. I was puzzled and asked how he had acquired so much of it. He explained that he had managed to obtain it free of charge. The workers at the mill had installed the blades incorrectly in some of the machinery, and the marble tiles were not suitable for export. They were happy to let us have it, along with some carved sandstone. We hooked up a trailer to the Hilux and made several trips to the mill to transport the material to the building site. It was enough to cover most of the floors of the house!

Unfortunately, the Lister generator stopped working one day, leaving us without electricity. Throughout the process, the neighbours continued to be incredibly supportive, visiting the construction site every day to offer encouragement. Our neighbour Jakkie Visser arrived one day, and I informed him about our generator dilemma. I asked if he knew where I could borrow one, as I explained it would take more than a week to get

the necessary parts to repair the Lister. He offered to take care of it and returned a few hours later with a brand-new generator.

One cold and rainy afternoon, while working on the road, the tractor suddenly became stuck in a muddy patch alongside the river. Upon closer inspection, I realised it had sunk all the way down to the engine. Since I had no way of pulling the tractor out that afternoon, I returned to the building site on foot. I could not find a simple solution to the situation, so I prayed and asked the Lord for help that night.



Figure 52. From the main house looking westwards.

The next morning, I woke up at dawn and returned to where the tractor was stuck. To my surprise, I found a group of about twenty or thirty people digging around the tractor. I did not recognise them, so I asked what was happening. 'Mr. Kobus is on his way with a large, four-wheel tractor, and we are just removing some of the mud,' came the reply. Another neighbour, Kobus Adriaanse, arrived a short time later with a larger tractor and was able to tow the old Massey onto solid ground. Our neighbour and

his team came to our rescue without hesitation and without expecting payment. They were truly angels in our time of need.

My in-laws paid us a visit during the construction of the house. Papa accompanied me to the farm to see our progress one Saturday. He spent the entire morning wandering beside the river, admiring the beautiful rocks and unique vegetation. I cannot recall where the students were, but he and I found ourselves alone that day. During a picnic lunch, he finally shared his opinion on what he had seen. "You're wasting your time, my child," he said. "Within six months, you'll burn yourself out here and will be bankrupt because God is not with you in this endeavour." I listened to his assessment but decided to ignore his advice. The following Sunday, we agreed that I would attend church alone to avoid upsetting my in-laws. I left the house quietly and walked across the street to the church building. The introduction to the service was wonderful, with the organist playing traditional hymns by Terstegen and Bach. I closed my eyes and immersed myself in the music. Marcel introduced a Lutheran hymn as the opening song, and I suddenly heard a beautiful tenor voice joining in behind me. When I turned around, I saw my father-in-law sitting alone in the pew. I was touched that he had put aside our minor disagreement from the previous day and had come to join me in worshipping God in a church that his brother had previously referred to as being part of the 'darkness' of false religion. We walked home together after the service, discussing the sermon and enjoying true fellowship once again. I began to wonder where my father-in-law truly stood in relation to KSB and our family.

As we continued with the construction, I realised that we needed a high-end grader to level out the road surface properly. I approached one of our neighbours, Willem van der Merwe, and asked if he would be willing to rent his grader and tractor to us. The next afternoon, he arrived at the construction site with both

pieces of machinery. I offered to operate them, but Willem refused it and spent hours levelling out the road for us. He completed the work at sunset and when I offered to pay him, he simply laughed and drove off. I am still indebted to him for his hard work that day.

That is the story how our house was built in De Brug and how the people Klawer became dear to us. Their kindness and generosity were genuine and practical, not superficial like some religious friendships which are based on pretence. By December, only a few finishing touches were left on the house's construction, and we were able to move in by January 1996. I established a new trust, named 'El Roï Trust' (meaning 'God Sees Trust'), and registered the property under its name. I chose this name as a tribute to God's provision throughout the entire process. We had experienced firsthand that God is alive and attentive to the needs of His children!

44. Namastone is Born

The following years were peaceful and uneventful. We became increasingly involved in the local congregation and community. I was selected to represent our church council in the establishment of a Christian radio station named Radio Namaqualand. Over the next five years, I hosted numerous broadcasts each week and served on the board. Additionally, we managed a campsite for visitors who came for river rafting and needed overnight accommodation. I obtained qualifications to register as a safari tour guide with the Department of Tourism, then known as SATOUR.

Further drama ensued when Heidi Slabber came to visit us. I had known her since she was a baby, as our families had been close for years. She joined KSB towards the end of 1992 and occasionally sought my counsel. Eventually, she asked if she could

work at the Mission, and we decided to train her as a bodyguard in my security team. She demonstrated a high level of competence during her training, and I appointed her as Lidia Dube's personal bodyguard in 1993. In September 1997, we received news that Lidia had been kidnapped under unusual circumstances. After investigating and contacting some people in KZN, I called my in-laws to reassure them that the kidnapping was staged and there was no real security threat.

Some years later, Heidi left the Mission with various allegations and accusations swirling around her. She later came to visit us at De Brug and confided in me how Lidia Dube involved her and Jannie le Roux in planning the fake kidnapping. I advised her that this matter should be brought to Erlo's attention, and we agreed that I would contact Jannie to encourage him to speak to Erlo. I contacted Jannie and explained that Heidi was with me. I told him that he needed to rectify the matter and I asked him to approach Erlo directly and sort the matter out as quickly as possible. I am unsure if he did or not, but Heidi and I felt we had done the right thing.

Eventually, Barney Mabaso caught wind of the entire affair. He was one of the main Zulu preachers at KSB and realised that the issue needed to be addressed. He confronted Erlo about the fact that the staged kidnapping had been covered up. Erlo responded deceptively, and the fallout ended up being a defining moment in KSB's history. Barney left the Mission, and several South African and European branches followed suit. I was once again accused of being the chief instigator and blamed for what had happened. The truth is that I had honestly tried to keep the matter private and had only contacted Jannie directly because he was personally involved, along with Heidi and Lidia.

As a result of the Mission's ongoing efforts to publicly defame me, our financial support decreased by 70%. The bank manager personally came to the farm and destroyed my chequebook and

credit card in front of me. We were uncertain about how to proceed and spent some time soul-searching to find a solution.

While chatting with a neighbour on the sidewalk of the main road one day, I noticed Nontie Coetzee's lorry carrying a load of scrap metal, including three mangled pickup trucks. This gave me an idea, so I quickly followed his truck to his scrapyard. I arrived just in time to see his machine crushing one of the pickups, and I managed to signal to him before he moved on to the second one. I explained my idea to him, and he was receptive to it. He kindly set aside the other two Land Cruisers for me. My plan was to dismantle them and sell the parts second-hand. Nontie and I agreed to split the profits, and this is how my little side hustle began. Like Paul's tentmaking, it became a way to support myself while continuing in ministry. The extra income also meant that the bank manager left us in peace again.

One day, a family with young children came and stayed in one of our guesthouses. (*We had converted the rooms previously used by the students into two guesthouses.*) I noticed that F, the husband, was frequently leaving in his double cab pickup truck over the weekend. On Sunday, we crossed paths as I was on my way to church, and I inquired about his whereabouts. He explained that there was currently a high demand for sandstone as many people in the Cape Peninsula were using it for construction. Later that afternoon, I went to the guesthouse to learn more. F was an architect in Cape Town and had helped design a large building that was being constructed with sandstone. It occurred to me that offering sandstone cutting services could be a profitable business given the high demand. This is how Namastone Pty Ltd was founded. Markus was living with us at the time as he had chosen to discontinue his studies in Agriculture and was currently unemployed. He decided to join me in this latest business venture.



Figure 53. Our stone masons hard at work near Klawer

Estelle provided the funds for us to purchase an old pickup truck and our business took off. Markus spent hours cutting the sandstone in the sun every day, until he had developed a dark tan. We were able to produce thirty tonnes of cut sandstone per week - sometimes more - and the money started rolling in. We reimbursed Estelle for the money she had given us for the truck, paid off my remaining debts, and even had enough left to purchase some machinery for our new business.

While reviewing our finances one day, I noticed that F had not transferred the necessary funds for me to pay the stonemason on Friday. After contacting F, he explained that the delay was due to the building contractor not paying him. Although he had usually handled sales and marketing, I decided to contact the contractor myself. I asked why he had not paid us as per our contract. He informed me that he had already transferred the funds to F and mentioned the exact amount that he had paid us. I was surprised to hear that it was twice the amount our company should have charged him. To ensure I had not misunderstood, I asked him to clarify the price per square meter, and he confirmed that it was double our agreed price. It was soon evident that F was

overcharging him to pocket the extra money for himself even though he was partner in Namastone with Markus and myself.

Despite his unethical dealings, F liked to present himself as a spiritual person and enjoyed the benefits of doing business with a preacher. I preferred peace over conflict, so I left the matter unaddressed. Our immediate problem of paying the stonemason was resolved when F paid half of what he had received into our account. However, the following Sunday Markus and Estelle found out what had happened. They refused to make any more deliveries until the matter was resolved. I contacted F the next day and informed him of their decision. He attempted to talk his way out of the situation with empty promises. However, he did not anticipate that my German wife and son would not be so easily convinced. They insisted on immediate reimbursement or a firm commitment to repay the company.

On Friday morning, I visited the mining site in Klawer where workers were clearing the area to build a new Wimpy restaurant and petrol station. Although we had sufficient funds to pay the workers for that week, we lacked customer contracts to sell the remaining sandstone. This meant that we would have to close the business. Around ten o'clock, I observed a blue Volkswagen Kombi slowly entering the site. Nontie Coetzee was driving and rolled down his window. "I understand that you and your business partner have had a disagreement," he said. "What are your plans now?"

I confirmed that this was the case and mentioned that we would be closing the business that afternoon. He looked at me intently before responding. "Koos, I like you and Markus. I will lend you one hundred thousand rand so that you can continue cutting sandstone." I was doubtful about the authenticity of the offer, but his wife arrived later and inquired about the amount we needed to cover our workers' wages for the week. I was taken aback and asked if Nontie had truly meant his offer. She confirmed, 'Yes,

Nontie is serious. He is willing to lend you up to a hundred-thousand-rand, interest-free. If you are unable to secure a buyer, Nontie will accept the sandstone as payment instead. However, attempting to deceive Nontie will result in physical confrontation, so don't try that.' We laughed and parted ways. Later that day, she brought the money we needed.

Three months later, the site for the new petrol station and Wimpy were covered in sandstone, and we had incurred a debt of R104,000. One Friday afternoon, I received a call from the building contractor for the Arabella Country Estate and Golf Course near Hermanus. They required a large amount of cut sandstone. After preaching on Sunday, I spent the remainder of the day loading the sandstone onto trucks for delivery. This sale allowed us to pay off our debts and keep the bank happy.



Figure 54. Another beautiful project by Namastone

Through this experience, I realised that nonbelievers can sometimes exhibit more kindness and humanity than professing

Christians. It is unfortunate that some who claim to be ministers of the Gospel sometimes turn out to be the greatest frauds. I made a resolution to always do good to my fellow man, regardless of what line of work I was in.

Nontie exemplified this kind of integrity and kindness, and we have remained friends to this day.

45. The Prophet

Marcel Vosloo is one of the few people in the world who can truthfully claim to have received a scholarship to pursue a master's degree at Princeton. His intellect was impressive. We worked together for sixteen years without any difficulties. Our children became friends, and I served as a church elder, chairman of the Outreach Commission, and an assistant preacher - all under his leadership. Thanks to God's grace, we never had any misunderstandings or conflicts until a self-proclaimed 'prophet' from the Congo showed up one day.

Given our experiences at KSB, I am very sceptical and cautious when people claim to be part of a new spiritual movement and attempt to introduce unusual experiences into the church. One Sunday, while I was seated among the elders, this 'prophet' made his way to the pulpit. He was highly recommended by the Dutch Reformed Church in Tulbagh, so everyone was eager to hear him speak. Although his command of the English language was limited, he spoke slowly and clearly as he addressed our congregation. He began to tell us about a great revival that was about to break out in Klawer and would spread around the world. This type of language felt familiar to me, as I had heard it many times at KSB. The preacher explained that while having coffee that morning at the Wimpy in Klawer, he received a great secret from an angel which took the form of a little bird. As though to confirm this revelation, he suddenly announced that the angel

had just entered the back of the church. Except now it had apparently changed its form for it stood so tall that it almost reached the ceiling - or so the prophet claimed. I calculated that the angel must be about five metres tall. I was curious about how he had managed to fit through the standard door. Maybe he had crawled in? And why did it suddenly change its appearance?

I was trying to process what had just happened in the service and my mind was racing. Many of the congregants, particularly the women, were caught up in the experience. A conflict erupted in the church as the congregation was divided over whether this prophet's revelations were authentic or not. Somehow, the group who believed that he was a genuine man of God convinced Marcel to invite him back again. Upon learning of his decision, I drove to his office in town and calmly informed him that my family and I would not attend any future meetings with this preacher or any other self-proclaimed prophets who wished to speak at our church. Marcel listened quietly and revealed that he also had his concerns and doubts. In particular, he had questioned why the angel had first appeared as a small bird before appearing as a giant in the church.

The self-proclaimed prophet never returned to our church. We experienced a few more storms within our congregation, and some people left over the years. But my friendship with Marcel remained strong, and although we do not communicate frequently, our hearts beat in unison. Through his openness and genuine acceptance of us, he won my family over to the Klawer congregation. We will remain eternally grateful to him and Riana. King David had thirty-three brave men as his bodyguards who shared his convictions and walked the same path as him. Some even rebuked David unflinchingly when necessary. Marcel is a leader who follows the same principle of surrounding himself with strong people who serve to build him up, even through rebuke when necessary.

As for Erlo Stegen, I cannot say the same was true of him.

A healthy congregation is one where the pastor remains true to their calling, resolutely continues their work of shepherding the flock, and surrounds themselves with godly elders. Together, they stand shoulder to shoulder and take on life's challenges. If this is not the case, the organisation may become toxic or begin resembling a sect. Marcel and the elders demonstrated how to lead a church in a healthy manner. Klawer and De Brug provided us with solace as we recovered from the spiritual abuse at KSB. These places became our true home, and we will always be thankful for our time there.

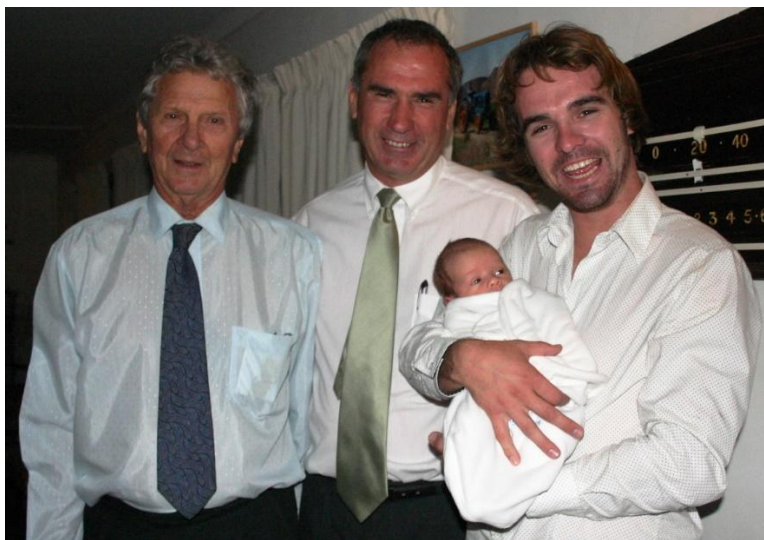


Figure 55. My dad, me, Markus, and Jaco-Willem Greeff

46. Dr. Colin Peckham

Sometime towards the end of February 1999, I received a long letter from Uncle Colin Peckham in Scotland. Dr. Peckham was formerly the principal of the Glenvar Bible School in Constantia

where I was a student for a few months. While we were still at KSB he visited the Mission a number of times as his sister, Aunt Mollie, was a resident there. She was married to Uncle Bruno Engelbrecht, and they were very involved with the ministry at KSB. Uncle Colin also had a connection to Uncle Erlo which dated back to their youth. Their parents were all involved in the so-called revival led by Anton Engelbrecht and were there when Claridge Bible House was started near Pietermaritzburg.

I had always enjoyed reminiscing with Dr. Peckham about the old days at Glenvar when he came to visit, and he always encouraged me to study further and remain faithful to the Lord. At the time he was living in Scotland where he was the principal of Faith Mission Bible College.

During his visits to KSB, he was able to participate in some of the Sunday services. He even served as a speaker at some of the conferences. He was more than just a theologian. He was a friend of the Stegen family, an ardent defender of conservative Christianity, and a mentor to me.

When I saw the package from him, I tore it open excitedly as it had been a long time since we had had any contact with each other. The first item was a short letter addressed directly to me in which he explained his concerns about the doctrinal positions held by KSB and his need to articulate them in writing. Included was also a copy of a letter he had sent to his sister and Uncle Erlo in which he detailed his concerns with KSB's theology. The most substantial part of the parcel, however, was a document called "An Assessment of KSB." The more I read of it, the more excited I became. It felt as though a weight was being lifted off me as I made my way through his analysis. Ever since leaving KSB, I had known things were wrong there. But I had always tended to blame myself or Estelle, thinking some of the fault lay with us. I sought to excuse some of the misdeeds by KSB's leadership by giving them the benefit of the doubt in assuming that some of

what had occurred were just misunderstandings. Even Lidia's staged kidnapping attempt I sought to rationalise by thinking it was a misguided attempt to seek attention by a woman who was feeling underappreciated as she became older. And suddenly, here in my hands, was a thorough and balanced critique articulating the same questions and problems I had had regarding the Mission's beliefs. I had never discussed them with Uncle Colin before.

Estelle also read the document, and we felt the need to call him in Scotland to express our gratitude and to ask if we had his permission to pass on his writings to a few close friends. He graciously sent the documents to me via email so that I could distribute them electronically. I sat down and wrote a letter to twenty-six of our friends. They were people who had faithfully supported us over the years but some had become noticeable distant and aloof after we parted ways with KSB. I attached Uncle Colin's critique of KSB in my letter.

The fallout was dramatic and immediate. The phone began to ring continuously. My father-in-law was one of the people who called. He was upset, and we spent a long time on the phone discussing everything. Old acquaintances from Europe also started contacting me. I discovered that my letters had also prompted some of the KSB leaders in Europe to pay Dr. Peckham a visit in Scotland. Following the discussions that took place there, they called for a meeting which they wanted Erlo and Friedel to attend. Many issues were raised there, including Barney Mabaso's separation from KSB, Lidia's staged kidnapping, and the theological problems highlighted by Uncle Colin. The more open and honest the European leaders were in their questions, the more aggressive and dictatorial the leaders from South Africa became. Within days, 26 of the congregations in Europe had cut ties with KSB. Once again, according to the Mission's leadership, I was the villain responsible for what had occurred. Kjell Olsen

and I corresponded for weeks by email but were unable to reach any kind of understanding or agreement. Friedel called me again and accused me of being zealous to destroy KSB and repeated the claim that I had been the one contacting the media in order to destroy their reputation. At that point I had still only contacted Femina magazine in order to make contact with Erika Bornman and had never discussed KSB with anyone from the media. I made this clear to Friedel, but he did not believe me. The result was that he and I became estranged for almost 10 years and I had no personal relationship with him in any meaningful sense. Even when we visited them, I would mostly keep to myself and read books in a bedroom somewhere while Estelle and the children spent time with Oma Rita.

I was also contacted by Dr. Michael Cassidy from the Evangelical Alliance who shared his concerns with me about KSB. I offered to help him out wherever possible. Their first request was to ask if Estelle would be willing to give a formal statement about her experiences in Kranskop in 1975. This proved to be a psychological battle as Estelle struggled to recall even basic details from that time. Despite having lived at the Scottsdale farm for over 6 months while the 'Kranskop meetings' took place, she could not even remember where they bathed, where the toilet was, or what they ate. Due to the trauma she experienced there, she had repressed almost all of those memories in the deepest part of her subconscious and it took many conversations and tears to find out what had occurred. Fortunately, we were friends with ministers who had the necessary expertise and experience in pastoral counselling to be able to help her. *(More will be said on this later).*

And for the first time, I began to understand the depth of the evil that had remained hidden for so long at KSB.

I later spent some time translating the report which the Evangelical Alliance had written about KSB into Afrikaans and distributed it far and wide.

47. Consequences of “Kranskop.”

I have already discussed some of the psychological impacts that Estelle experienced as a result of the Kranskop meetings, including her regular struggles with doubt. After we left KSB, there was a noticeable improvement, and her times of distress became less frequent. But occasionally she would still sink into depression and anxiety as the trauma resurfaced.

I believe it was in 1999 when I oversaw an outreach team from two congregations based in the Western Cape. We travelled to the Namib desert just south of Sesfontein and were partnering with the Kunene for Christ Society. Our youngest three daughters were there with us, as well as a large group from the Klawer and Melkbosstrand Dutch Reformed churches. A pastor from Melkbosstrand was also there with his wife. We set up camp at a beautiful little hot spring called Warm Quelle. Despite the lack of modern conveniences, we enjoyed being out in nature under the trees. I divided the group into teams and assigned them different tasks, including food preparation for each day. Estelle was part of the group that included the preacher couple from Melkbosstrand.

I returned from our outreach in the evening one day after ministering at a school and found Estelle and the pastor deep in conversation around a campfire. Later that evening she told me that he was also a qualified psychologist and asked if I would mind her sharing our experiences at KSB with him. I was grateful to hear her say that she was willing to discuss it with someone who was qualified to help. Early the next morning, I modified the team schedules so that Estelle and the pastor could stay behind and

handle the cooking again, giving them a chance to talk. The conversation went on for several hours, and Estelle had the chance to unburden herself and tell the whole, sad story, including what happened at Kranskop.

Life continued as normal, but after about three months it suddenly occurred to me that Estelle had not fallen into her usual periods of depression since the outreach camp. I talked to her about it, and she was also surprised as she realised that her mental health had been a lot more stable. That was the end of her episodes of despair and, since then, her exuberant and happy personality has returned.

Unfortunately, the many years of having to be the stable and unshakeable one in our family finally took its toll on me. In January 2008, my habit of ignoring my own emotional difficulties and stress finally caught up with me. 2007 had been a good time and we ended the year filming a TV show based in the Zebra Mountains where the Namibian border meets Angola. A Norwegian TV crew was involved in the shoot and at one point one of the leaders began negotiating a contract for a new series called 'Celebrity Shock' with me. It was to consist of short episodes and would start out being shot in the Karoo before ending in the coastal region of Mombasa in Kenya. We were to be paid upfront, and the contract was lucrative enough that by the end of 2007 we had paid off our debts, helped pay for our children's studies, and still had enough left over to take us comfortably through to the end of February the following year. Estelle was also turning 50 on the 21st of January and I decided to use our savings to spoil her. When I had bought her engagement ring years ago, it had cost 185 rand. She still wore it every day. But not only was it her birthday, it was also our 30th wedding anniversary so I decided to do something extravagant.

My first surprise for her was having a new wedding ring made. For a rather hefty fee, the jeweller was able to melt the old one

down and add some larger diamonds. Next, I booked two guesthouses in Paternoster and also booked a small restaurant to ourselves where we planned to spend the Saturday evening celebrating with our children and their spouses. On the Saturday morning, I decided to take a walk alone along the beach. My cell phone suddenly chimed, and I glanced down to see a message from the head of the production company in charge of the new series. The message simply said: 'Everything cancelled. Credit crunch.' Just those words. Nothing more. Apparently, the American house prices had risen in the early 2000's. People bought into the market, thinking that the prices would continue to go up. However, by 2007 the market stabilised causing prices to fall by the beginning of 2008. It ended up being the largest economic crisis since 1929 and the effects were felt around the world. Not only was my lucrative TV production cancelled, but we also had customers in our safari business demanding their deposits back as they struggled to deal with the economic difficulties. The only problem was I had already spent some of their money.

It felt like an icy claw had suddenly grabbed my heart and was squeezing it until I broke out in a cold sweat. If anyone had been around as I saw the message they would have been shocked. Especially given that I had always been the steady and calm one in a crisis. I had to be. I was a preacher, after all, and it was my duty to be the one that went through trials with a silent dignity and meek acceptance. But this time it was too much for me. When we arrived back at De Brug the following night, I was unable to sleep. I kept quiet but wandered around the house before going outside to pace around in the cold night air. I continued to do this for weeks. Within three months, I had lost almost 15kg and was praying continually. My Bible was in tatters as I buried myself in God's word and my diary was overflowing as I poured out my pain in writing. I was inconsolable, and doubts about God's care, providence, love, and omnipotence took over.

I was alone and unable to find comfort. As depression took hold, suicidal thoughts crept in and seemed like a viable way to escape the pain I was in. Day and night I wrestled with these dark thoughts.

A Christian who has given in to doubt is no better than an animal - he may even be worse than an animal. And that was me. I began lashing out with accusations at my loved ones around me. Like a wounded baboon who pulls out his own intestines and attacks those closest to him. I turned against Estelle in my thoughts, irrationally accusing her of wasting our money. I began to think of the children as selfish. I went back and forth between the idea of committing suicide and the idea of giving up my responsibilities and becoming a bum on the streets. Perhaps I could just fill a backpack and wander through Africa. Maybe to Kilimanjaro or somewhere far away.

During that dark time, I asked Estelle to leave the farm. Being the understanding woman that she is, she complied. The children also gave me space and I found myself alone at De Brug, wrestling with my thoughts for weeks on end. At one stage I drove to the coast and spent over a week there. I switched my phone off and spent the time reading my Bible and praying in desperation.



Figure 56. Rain falling in the Namib Desert. Warm Quelle is just before the mountains.

When I was back at De Brug, an old friend showed up one day on a motorcycle. He was also a pastor and had come to recommend someone by the name of George who he thought could help me. George was based in Somerset West and had a ministry specifically aimed at pastors. I agreed to see him and asked Estelle to accompany me. The trip was a tense one as we hardly spoke a word to each other. Normally, our road trips had always been our happiest times together as a couple. We would often listen to music and spent the time in conversation, discussing anything and everything. This time the trip was marked by an awkward silence. We walked into George's office, and he stared at me intently as we sat down. "I know you" he said. He explained that he had previously been a professor and lecturer at the University of Bloemfontein and had visited KBS a number of times with different groups of students. "I heard you preach there, and I know what your problem is." I stared at him, dumbfounded. Estelle tried to explain something, but he stopped her and sent me to the next room to fill out a long questionnaire. What they

discussed when I was out of the room, I do not know. I completed the questionnaire and handed it to his secretary before waiting for George's assessment of my results.

With all the experience of an impartial counsellor, George minced no words and gave us clear instructions. He urged me to immediately sell off whatever assets I owned to pay off my debts. He also instructed Estelle to take over the responsibility of our finances. He told me in no uncertain terms that I needed to stop praying and fasting so much and focus instead on finding things to be grateful for in life. Even the little things like a nice cup of coffee, a beautiful starry night, or the sight of an eagle swooping around De Brug. It was difficult to part with our safari equipment. Even harder to let go of our two vehicles. But it was either that or going under completely. George had made that abundantly clear to me. By the grace of God, I was able to do it. We had one more safari in Kruger National Park which we had already committed to in May. We had to borrow a vehicle and the necessary equipment from our children. But it turned into the most memorable safari of all as Estelle and I were able to reconnect once more. I also made peace with God again and surrendered my life unconditionally to His care. I also learned to balance prayer and fasting with times of gratefulness and genuine laughter as I reminded myself that God was good.

A hyper-spiritual approach to depression almost ruined me. And prayers and Bible reading which were used to avoid my responsibilities almost ruined my family. To this day, I have no idea what is going on in my bank account - Estelle still handles all such matters. And I am more careful these days to guard against depression and negative thoughts. I still try to find small things to thank God for - like the delicious fish we fried this afternoon. The season of depression served as a reminder that we are never anything more than sinner saved by grace, living in His love.

48. Further studies

As the new millennium dawned, we were well established in the Klawer community. Monika was working in Cape Town and studying psychology through Unisa; Markus was living and working with us at De Brug while completing his business degree; Annemarie was studying medicine at Stellenbosch; and Ronelle and Steffi were doing well in high school. Estelle had completed her B.A degree with a major in German and I had finished an Honours degree in theology at Stellenbosch. The sandstone business was going well, and we also became very involved helping the Angolan refugees at the Osire refugee camp in the Okahandja district. We had to close the Bible school due to a lack of funds, but our safari business was slowly picking up again. That was when I decided to do a research paper on KSB. Professor Flip Theron from Stellenbosch agreed to supervise my Masters and we hit it off immediately.

He had just returned from a study trip in Europe when I had to sit an oral exam with him. Before the exam started, I asked him about the trip and how things were going within European Christianity. "Wonderful" was his reply. "The theology side of things is going very well." "And how is the life of the church over there, professor?" I asked. "Very bad, Koos" he answered. I could not help but burst out laughing. "Professor, you're the one who taught me that theology is science in the service of the church. How can it be going well with the theology and badly with the church?" He stared at me for a long time and then quietly admitted that there must be a big problem with the Bible colleges and the academic institutions teaching theology. His willingness to be honest and forthright was a large part of the reason why I wanted him to supervise my Masters.

My research topic was comparing the implicit and explicit theological beliefs at KSB. It is always the case that the greater the disparity between these two, the less healthy a church will

be. In layman's terms, your actions must match your words. This is true for individuals as well as the church as a whole. If you claim certain beliefs but fail to live them out, then you are just a hypocrite. My research involved digging into KSB's clearly stated beliefs while determining whether they are lived out in the way that they claim. In other words: is there a discrepancy between what they preach and what they do?

The project took me more than three years due to the fact that I was still working, and the safaris often took me away from home for weeks at a time. Not to mention my work for Kunene for Christ and my regular duties in my home church in Klawer. During my three years of study, I was able to compile a list of sources which grew to be almost 500 pages long. It included letters, testimonies, statements, articles, and personal accounts of what people had experienced within KSB - both in South Africa and in Europe.

The information I received was sobering and disturbing. The rabbit trail of KSB's evil and deceit proved to be a long and dark one. Unfortunately, Professor Flip developed some serious health problems and could not continue in his role as supervisor. I completed the degree through Unisa and, by the time I was done, I felt like it was time to step away from the KSB story. The mountain of lies, hypocrisy, and their ability to deceive other churches around the world was emotionally taxing to study. I wanted to nail the coffin shut once and for all and leave KSB behind me.

On the 22nd of April 2004, I graduated with my Master of Theology degree under the guidance of Prof Jacques Theron. The very same one who was part of the panel at the Youth With A Mission conference held at Claridge way back in 1977.

49: TV productions

We were visiting the Muisboskerm open-air diner near Lamberts Bay when I received a phone call from a stranger named Tom. Estelle and I were in the area for a safari. The man was calling from Belgium and told me he had read my article in the 'Leisure Wheels' magazine about Kaokoland and the Himba people. "I have made some inquiries, and I believe you were lying in your article." I felt myself becoming annoyed but kept my emotions in check. "Look man, I don't have time to argue with you about whether the article is true or not. If you want to see for yourself, you're welcome to fly to Windhoek. I will pick you up there and let you meet the Himba people for yourself. If after a week you still feel that I lied to you, I will waive the cost of the safari. If I was telling the truth, you pay full price."

Two days later the phone rang again. It was Tom again and he informed me that he and his partner would be arriving in Windhoek on Monday at 8am. It was Friday evening by this point, and I was back at De Brug. The following day, Estelle prepared some food for the trip while I serviced the Nissan and the trailer. I was careful to pack everything we would need, including some spare tyres in case of an emergency. At lunch time on Sunday, I started the 1,200km trip to Windhoek. I pulled over in the early hours of Monday morning to catch a little bit of sleep. I met Tom and Lynne and we travelled to Kaokoland together. We passed through the foothills of the Zebra mountains near Okangwati, setting up camp on the banks of the Otjivese River, about an hour's drive from the main road. I learned that they were film producers and that they asked if I would be interested in helping them shoot a TV series in this area.



Figure 57. Our home from home for a TV production. Somewhere in the Namib desert

That was how we found ourselves in a remote desert in the eastern foothills of the Steilrandberge in December of 2004. We worked ourselves half to death, even struggling to find time to eat in between. This was our first proper venture into the world of television production, and it proved to be a lucrative venture. By that time, Ronelle was attending university and Steffi had plans to begin studies in occupational therapy. KSB felt like a distant memory, we were happy, and the children were doing well. We decided to form a TV production company called "Africa Productions." Our new line of work saw us working with people from Belgium, Germany, New Zealand, Australia, and Norway. We were also fortunate to be able to take some of the children and their friends along to help with the work. Sometimes we would be off in some isolated area for six weeks or more.

In August of 2012, I took a group of three Scottish people on a safari. They were very pleasant to be around, and we spent 27

days in some remote parts of Namibia and Botswana. They loved the isolation and preferred staying in each location for at least a few days. In the foothills of the Tsodillo mountains, I found some time to write about our time at KSB. It was also at this time that I realised our days of running safaris were coming to an end. I was about to turn 56 and the demands of camping and sleeping on thin mattresses or in a tent were becoming too much for me. I dropped the tourists off at the airport near Windhoek just after 12 noon on Saturday. I phoned Estelle and told her that I was not sure I would make it home that day as I did not feel up to the 12-hour drive back to De Brug. It was time to start a new phase in our lives.



Figure 58. On the way for TV production

In 2013, I won a writing competition with an article about conservation. This generated enough interest from the Namibian government to commission me to produce a half-hour long documentary based on the article. I spent most of 2014 working on it, completing it by the end of the year. *(The documentary is available on YouTube at the following link: https://youtube/iR_uB0iDmLQ)*

We did two more TV productions, but after that, this chapter of our lives also came to an end. We were thankful for that time. Not only for the money we earned to help our children to further their education, but also for the good friends we made along the way.

50. In Full-time Ministry

2013 to 2017 proved to be a transitional period for us in which we were almost entirely based in Namibia. Part of this time was spent in Opuwo where we became involved with small congregations in Kamanjab, Khorixas, and Fonteine. Unfortunately, I developed a serious problem in my kidneys, and we were forced to return to De Brug. During the next few years, we started two solar companies and worked in various places in Namibia and Namaqualand installing solar panels. I also started working on my PhD and found it very stimulating to be doing academic research again. My responsibilities in our church in Klaver and my work writing articles and film scripts kept me busy the rest of the time.

Sometime at the beginning of 2016, Etienne Maritz phoned me. He was then pastoring a church in Koppies in the Free State. I had not had contact with him since he was ministering in Okahandja, so his call was a surprise to me. He informed me that he had cancer and asked if I would be able to preach a series of services during Pentecost. I agreed, and Estelle and I drove to Koppies. It turned out to be a wonderful time with Etienne and his wife Trudie. Despite being gravely ill, he spent night after night in church propped up in a comfortable chair so he could listen to my messages. It rained almost the entire time we were there, and we spent hours around Etienne's bed. We reminisced about the past, and reflected on some of the mistakes we made in our youthful zeal to serve the Lord. We also talked about some of the problems

at KSB before the conversation turned to the congregations in Stampriet and Okahandja. He had pastored those churches faithfully and I had often preached there as a guest. We were able to have some similar conversations on the phone shortly before he died.



Figure 59. Sunset over the Zambezi River.

At the start of 2017, Estelle and I found ourselves in the Caprivi region of Namibia, accompanied by our soon-to-be son-in-law, Johan Albertyn. We were there to scout locations for a film. I was driving near Rundu one day when I received a call from Clem Marais who worked for the Synod office in Windhoek. “Would you be interested in coming and helping in the Okahandja congregation?” he asked. Apparently, the numbers in what was once a flourishing congregation had dwindled and they could not even afford to pay to keep a full-time pastor on staff. Somewhere between Grootfontein and Rundu, Estelle and I decided we had to accept the position. We could still clearly hear Etienne's words echoing in our ears from our conversation about Okahandja. However, prior commitments meant that we would only be able to start at the beginning of June.

At the end of May, my father-in-law turned 90 and we went to KSB as a family to join the celebration. All of Friedel's children were there, along with many grandchildren and great-grandchildren. We were quite a crowd. For the first time there was an amicable freedom between all of us and it turned out to be a very blessed family gathering. While we were there, my mother-in-law mentioned one day that Dr. Peet Botha was ministering over in the US but that things were not going well. Through some cautious enquiry, I was eventually able to obtain Peet's contact details.

For most of our stay, a thick fog hung in the air and a soft rain fell steadily. I was walking near Erlo's house with Estelle and the children one day when he approached us with his daughter Hulda. As we greeted each other, he immediately took my hand and would not let go. He started talking to me in Afrikaans and explained to me that he recognised me but was having trouble recalling my name. During the short conversation I had to reiterate my name three times and explain that I was Estelle's husband. After we parted ways, my daughters immediately informed me that Erlo was showing typical symptoms of dementia. *(Two of them are occupational therapists, one is a medical doctor, and one used to work with dementia patients in the UK.)* We agreed that Erlo was definitely not well.

The Mission was still covered in the thick fog when I took a walk on my own. As I wandered past the mechanical workshop, I encountered one of the senior co-workers who greeted me warmly. While we were exchanging pleasantries about our wives and children, he suddenly told me that he knew about a coup being orchestrated by Lidia Dube. Allegedly, she intended to try to remove Friedel and his son Arno from their leadership positions. I was stunned by this revelation and struggled to find the right words in response. We parted ways and I continued my walk. As I approached Erlo's house, one of the white co-workers

came across my path. He invited me to his house for a cup of coffee. He suddenly told me that he was aware of problems brewing in the leadership at KSB. According to him, Lidia was orchestrating a smear campaign, not only against Friedel and Arno, but also against Peet Botha. Once again, I listened in silence.

On the Monday morning before we were to leave, my father-in-law and I had breakfast together. We were alone at the table when he suddenly asked me if I could remember what I told him way back in 1994. "No," I answered, unsure of what he was referring to. Friedel clarified: "You said that you had to leave KSB because you could no longer violate your conscience. You felt that you could no longer stay quiet and pretend everything was okay here but that you did not want a lot of conflict and that it was best for you to leave." "Yes, dad. That was what I experienced" I answered him. Then he started crying. "My child, I disobeyed God. I violated my conscience. I'm so sorry and I apologise to you. You were faithful to God and your conscience. I failed." I took hold of his hands because he was shaking as he cried. We prayed together, and I asked him if it was okay if I stayed in regular contact with him. I added that the congregation in Okahandja had some major challenges and that I could use his advice and prayers. He agreed to stay in touch with me. Estelle and I left KSB with grateful hearts. When we arrived in Okahandja we moved into a small house in a retirement village called 'Sonder Sorge.' The home typically assigned to the pastor was being rented out to try and help raise funds for the church.

Before we left KSB, we had received a phone call from our lawyer in Windhoek. He worked with the Minister of Internal Affairs and was in the process of arranging our work visas for Namibia. He informed me that the Minister wanted to see me as soon as possible before issuing us with a two-year visa. I explained that we were still in KZN but that we would be in Okahandja within a

few days. I made an appointment to see the Minister in one week's time.

The elderly people at 'Sonder Sorge' were wonderfully hospitable after we moved in. We knew some of them from the years when Etienne had pastored the church and they made us feel at home right away. After the first Sunday service, we were able to connect with other people who still remembered us from previous visits. When Estelle and I took our morning walks, we would often be stopped along the way by people who wanted to greet us.

The day of my appointment with the Minister of Internal Affairs arrived and Estelle and I went to his office and waited patiently to be called in. Vipuaa, our lawyer, was waiting there with the necessary paperwork. The Minister was running late, and when his secretary showed up, she gave some half-hearted excuse for his tardiness. He only approved a three-month permit and told us to come back in six weeks' time to obtain our two-year permit. Vipuaa looked embarrassed at what had happened and apologised repeatedly that he was unable to secure a two-year permit for us. Estelle and I were happy with the short-term permit and went to find some sushi after leaving the Minister's office.

We attended an afternoon service in the agricultural hall in Hochfeld the following Sunday. It was about 130km away, but the service was lovely and everyone pitched in to help with the lunch. The women busied themselves making salads while the men fired up the barbecue and started grilling the meat. I could see some of the men eyeing the cold beers off to the side, but apparently, they were hesitant to partake as they had just had a new pastor start at the church and were unsure how he felt about alcoholic beverages. I decided to take the initiative and approached one of the elders to ask if I could have a glass of white wine. I also mentioned that my wife would love a glass of red wine. That seemed to break the ice.

I discovered in conversation that some of the people were driving the 130km to Okahandja regularly to attend the church there. I suggested that we hold a service in Hochfeld once a month to make it easier for the locals. Everyone agreed to my idea. That was how we ended up having two services on Sundays - one in Okahandja and one in a remote part of the district. Our local service was at 9am while the second service would be held at noon. Sometimes I would stay the night in the remote area and visit some of the congregants the following day. The farming community there quickly accepted us, much like the nursing home residents had.

During this time, someone from KSB mentioned to me that a retired judge named Meyer Joffe had asked Erlo for financial assistance to cover some of his medical expenses. The situation sounded strange to me. I called my father-in-law and shared my doubts about the request, adding that judges were typically prohibited from soliciting money from citizens due to the nature of their work. A few weeks later I heard another bizarre story about the finances at the Mission. This time it was claimed that Queen of the Netherlands contacted Erlo personally to ask for money to fund the search for some Dutch citizens who had gone missing. I again warned Friedel that the story was completely improbable as Dutch royalty would never approach a South African mission station for financial aid. I added that it was equally unlikely that the royal family would become involved in a political matter of this nature because the government of that country would handle it. It was clear to me that someone was trying to defraud the trustees of KSB. On top of it all these requests were for cash!

One of our neighbours in the retirement village was a German lady who had been at boarding school with Manfred Stegen. We became like adopted children to her and every morning she would check in with us to make sure we were doing well. Another

one of the neighbours enjoyed woodwork and made a beautiful cross for us. Two gentlemen who we called Uncle Hennie and Uncle Barney would sometimes invite us to have breakfast at the local Wimpy. The restaurant offered discounts for seniors, and since we were residents at the retirement village, we also qualified. One evening, I received a call from an elderly lady called Aunty Rehle, asking me to come pray for her neighbour, Uncle Tom, as he was very ill. He looked very frail. We spoke for a short time, and it was obvious that he was at peace and ready to die. I placed my hand on his shoulder and prayed with him. I could feel his body trembling under my hand. Early the next morning I received a call from Aunty Rehle telling me that oom Tom had gone home. I was initially confused by her wording and asked where his home was. "Uncle Tom has gone to heaven, Reverend - he has gone home," she replied. It was a beautiful testimony. Even though I had not known him, I visited him on his last day on earth and said my goodbyes as he had been such a blessing to me. Some of the German farmers started attending services we held in some of the surrounding areas. They would gather excitedly around Estelle to talk to her. Within weeks, the attendance at the church in Okahandja had grown so much that they were able to pay me a proper salary. The few months we spent there was one of the most memorable times in my and Estelle's lives.

The day came for me to see the Minister of Internal Affairs again about obtaining our long-term work visa. But that was easier said than done. When I walked into his office, he was seated behind a large desk, flipping through some paperwork. It seemed he required some further documentation from me to approve the visa. Unfortunately, this became a regular ritual. I would drive the 70km to Windhoek only to be told I needed some other document. Vipuaa grew more and more confused by the whole affair. After the umpteenth failed attempt at securing the visa, I was driving back to Okahandja one day. I prayed whilst driving

because the whole situation was strange, and it seemed wise to seek advice from the Lord. Suddenly I thought of Philip from the book of Acts. He preached the gospel in Samaria and the Lord had blessed his efforts with revival. But Philip was called away to help the eunuch from Ethiopia. And later he was called to the towns of Philistia and even went as far as Caesarea. If Philip had been like me, he would have stayed in Samaria given the success he had experience there. Or I would have gone to Addis Ababa to start a Bible school there. That was when the Lord impressed a question upon my mind: "Are you willing to come when I call you and go when I send you? Even if you and Estelle are feeling happy and settled in your current situation and would prefer more stability in your lives?" I suddenly knew that our days in Okahandja were numbered and that was why our work visa had not been approved. I also knew that God was calling me away from here to help with the crisis brewing at KSB.

I decided to contact Peet Botha in the US. I knew Peet and his wife, Andra, from my days at KSB. After Peet finished his studies, he felt called to Natal, we had stayed in touch for a while. Later he became increasingly involved at KSB and helped to start 'Cedar College' on the Mission. After completing his doctorate, he was officially appointed the head of the college by the North-West University in Potchefstroom. Now I had the chance to reconnect and discuss my research about KSB with him. While talking to him one day, he mentioned that there were serious problems in the KSB branch he was in charge of in the US. He recounted how co-workers from the Mission had paid him a visit and had accused him and his wife of a variety of infractions. Estelle and I were all too familiar with this kind of attack from KSB's leadership, where they dissected every action to find fault. I knew trouble was headed Peet's way.

In September 2017, our baby Steffi married Johan Albertyn. After the wedding Estelle was somewhat trepidatious about returning

to Okahandja as our 3-month visa had expired and the Minister still seemed to be stalling with the paperwork for our longer work permit. We decided she would live with one of the children while I went back to Okahandja and tried to finalise the visa situation. Those two months were a struggle for us. Sometimes I would take the overnight bus to travel to Vredendal where Estelle was staying with Monika. On Thursday evenings I would take the bus back to Windhoek to be back in time to preach on Sunday. Technically I was not supposed to be doing this as I still had not acquired the necessary work permit. The church council was very understanding, and everyone tried to think of ways to resolve the problem, but all to no avail. Another church council meeting was to be held in January and I asked the church to excuse me from permanent presence until then. If I had still been unable to secure a work permit by the time January came, I would take it as a sign that our time in Okahandja was over. But the decision to step down was not an easy one. I grieved for weeks and was unable to pray. I felt angry at God. For the first time in my life, I was a full-time pastor, and had been enjoying my work. Now it being snatched away on a legal technicality.

Things continued developing on the KSB front. Peet and Andra were called back to South Africa by the leadership of the Mission. They were subjected to the full KSB treatment - weekly meetings in which they were accused of all manner of things. They were confused and upset, as were Estelle and I when we found out about it.

It seemed like we were stuck. Even our house at De Brug was falling apart and the garden was withering away. We tried to maintain it as best as we could, but we were caught in a rut. I received a call from my son-in-law Wickus one day, asking for my help. He needed someone to work as a truck driver for a few months as he had a contract with a company in Upington and had to buy raisins for them. I agreed to help him out. It was

summertime, and unfortunately the Mercedes truck I had to drive lacked both power steering and air conditioning. The work continued for four months, and my shoulders and back were sore the entire time. But we were surviving.

51. Move to Jacobsbaai

I had just unloaded my first raisin load when I received a call from Markus inviting me over for breakfast. While he was preparing the food, he told me about a call he had received from Estelle's youngest brother, Ralph. He was still living in Friedel's house on the Mission but he was just a regular congregant there and did not occupy any leadership position. He was also a businessman with investments in numerous companies. Ralph and his wife Karin had recently visited Annemarie and Wim in Jacobsbaai and were so impressed with the area that they bought themselves a plot of land there. Ralph had phoned to ask if Markus would build him a house on their newly acquired property. Markus, in turn, was eager to enlist my help. "Dad, are you prepared to oversee for me? I am unable to manage a large project like this right now but if you agree to take over the construction of the house, I will provide labourers and anything else you need. I will also be happy to discuss any of the logistics over the phone along the way."

We talked to the other children and wondered about our future plans for De Brug. Estelle and I were getting older, and the girls were well established in careers of their own. Monika was working in the tourism industry in Vredendal; Annemarie was working as a doctor in Jacobsbaai; Ronelle was the wife of a farmer and owned a beautiful farm in the Hantam area called Vanrhynshoek; and Steffi had just moved to Vanderstelskraal in the Bredasdorp area. It was unrealistic to expect any of them to uproot their lives and move to De Brug to look after the property. Markus was also unavailable as his business was based in

Vredendal and his construction work took him all over the West Coast. We did discuss the possibility of him moving to De Brug but it was logistically impossible given the requirements of his work. There was no other option but for us to move on.



Figure 60. Part of the little town of Jacobsbaai

My son-in-law Wim also works as a doctor and always thinks things through carefully. But once he has reached a decision, he always follows through. He suddenly informed us that he had purchased a small house in Jacobsbaai and that we were welcome to live there as long as we needed. Annemarie and Steffi also purchased a plot of land in the same town. We started packing up our belonging at De Brug. In addition to the main house, we also had to clear out the two guest houses. We gave away what we could no longer keep and put our furniture in a storage facility in Vredenburg. It was sad saying our final goodbyes to De Brug and to Klawer, but it also meant a new chapter in our lives was ahead of us.

On Easter weekend of 2018, we moved into Wim's one-bedroom home in Jacobsbaai. There was a small desk sitting in the hallway

already, so I had a place to put my piles of research papers. There were only two other families living in the security village, and the house had a porch which overlooked the sea. Sometimes we would see rabbits and small antelope who came to feed in our garden, and we were often awoken by the sound of pheasants. Three owls also hatched right in front of the house and became tame enough that they would come and sit on the porch. Being surrounded by the beauty of nature was making my transition to the next stage of life a little easier. There were times where I still felt grief and anger over the Lord's decision to have us leave Okahandja. Despite this, I still went to church.

Back at KSB, Peet and Andra had been taken through the mill. Peet had the wisdom to start writing down some of his experiences. Given the stress he was under, finding an outlet in the form of writing was a sensible endeavour. His grief and brokenness were palpable in the events he recorded on his blog. The fact that he made it public online only fuelled the fires of KSB's rage and caused them to tighten the screws further. We had numerous discussions about the best way to proceed, and I was sure that there was no way for there to be a peaceable outcome. KSB, like almost every other cult, would not accept someone leaving their ranks and speaking ill of them. They felt justified in their outrage towards people like Peet, as they held the sectarian view that they were the sole possessors of truth. If someone leaves the group - especially a prominent member- it causes a huge crisis for the remaining residents and raises all kinds of uncomfortable questions about the way the leadership is handling things. And they hate anyone who makes these kinds of waves because their own insecurities are exposed. You will never find them handling disagreements with maturity, the way Paul and Peter did in the New Testament. And they would never continue working with someone with whom they disagree. At KSB, you are either a loyal follower or their sworn enemy. There is no in between.



Figure 61. In the pulpit in Vredenburg Dutch Reformed Church

One Sunday, we accompanied the children to a church service held in Vredenburg. Dr. Erik Basson was the preacher that day. I had known him since childhood, and we had always called him 'Rotjie' as his face had certain rat-like features when he was young. Erik had a very strong personality and was unfazed by being known by this nickname. I was happy to hear my old friend preach again after many years. After the service, Rotjie came over and greeted us. He promised to visit us during the coming week. I believe it was on the Wednesday afternoon that he stopped by. I showed him the progress at the building site before he joined coming back to our home for coffee. Later that afternoon we spent some time sitting on the veranda watching the sun set. I shared about my recent struggles with God and my sadness at having to leave Okahandja. We also discussed my studies and the issues with KSB. Rotjie offered some encouragement, and I appreciated his openness and honesty.

A few days later I was approached by the church we had attended and offered work. Thanks to Erik's influence, I was able to preach once again, and had the encouragement I needed to complete my studies. Sometimes a small gesture like a kind word or a glass of water can go a long way. He provided the support I needed at a difficult time, and for that I am indebted to him.

By October, Ralph's house was finished, and he and Karin were able to move in. I was delighted to have members of the Stegen family close by again, and we spent countless hours in front of the fireplace or barbecuing together. Papa and Mama Stegen also paid a visit and, before long, their home became a regular meeting spot for family, friends, and others who had been part of various KSB congregations. We began to realise how great of a need there was for those still trapped in KSB. Not only had we heard Peet and Andra's story, but more and more people were coming forward with similar testimonies of their time at the Mission. It confirmed our worst fear: KSB had disintegrated into a full-blown cult. The very heart of the work was completely rotten and was poisoning its own members with its toxic ideology. We were grateful to have escaped in 1994 and that we now had the opportunity to help others.

52. Later years

As mentioned earlier, most of this book was completed in 2012. However, a lot has unfolded since then, including further developments in the KSB saga. My academic interest in the Mission as a religious organisation dates back to 2003, when I completed a master's thesis on their leadership structure. Since 2005, I have also been fascinated with the psychological motivations that drive cult leaders and what personality types contribute to them forming harmful groups. It will probably come as no surprise that my interest was inspired by my interactions

with Erlo Stegen. Unfortunately, I could not find a university equipped to handle a research project of that nature. After two years of searching in vain, I decided to change my topic to an investigation into the interpretations of supernatural revelations.

Ascension Day of 2019 fell on May 30th. I was not assigned to preach that day and was dealing with subcontractors working on Wim and Annemarie's house. While on my way to Vredenburg for supplies, I received a phone call. It was Lungani Mabaso, the younger brother of my friend Barney. "Brother Koos, are you listening to the service at KSB?", he asked. "Lidia Dube is spewing a lot of nonsense from the pulpit. You must listen in as quickly as possible." I told him I was currently busy with work but asked him to give me a summary of what was being said. He sent me updates as I went about my work, and later that evening I watched her rant myself. Fortunately, it was before KSB's leadership had the chance to remove the video from their website. The whole thing was shocking, to say the least. Lidia publicly attacked Friedel, Arno and Peet Botha in the course of her rant. Perhaps more shocking was the terrible effect it had on Arno Stegen who issued a tearful apology for the whole world to see for something we all suspected he had nothing to do with.

The next day was my father-in-law's birthday. He was busy with a series of meetings in Europe, but I was able to put a call through to him in between services. I wished him a happy birthday before asking if he had heard the previous day's tirade from Lidia Dube. He confirmed that he had also listened to it and found it very disturbing. A day or two later he called me and asked if I could help him do a proper investigation into the finances of the Mission. I did not feel that I was the best man for the job and suggested he ask Ralph or Arno to handle it. He explained that Arno was not in a position to do so as he was a director of many of the Mission's companies as well as a trustee in their non-profit organisation. Ralph was also unwilling to involve himself in the

investigation. I suggested Trevor Dahl as another possible option, but Friedel informed me that Trevor was struggling with some health issues. That left me as the only possible candidate, and I agreed to investigate the matter on his behalf. I decided I would fly to Durban on the 5th of June to meet him in person and begin the investigation.

Before I left, I called Uncle Manfred's son Jimmy to inquire if he knew which chartered accounting firm KSB used. Not only did he know who they were, but also informed me that it was the same firm he used for his own companies. I asked if he would be willing to pick me up from Ballito where I would be staying with my in-laws and take me to meet the accountants. Over the past few days, several former students of Domino Servite had also reached out to me and offered their services. Among them were some who were now working as lawyers, and I asked them to meet us in Ballito on the morning of June 5th.

When my plane landed in Durban, I received a call from Jimmy informing me that he was on his way to Ballito with two of the directors of the chartered accountancy firm. He added that he was also in contact with a private investigator named Mike Bolhuis who agreed to send an experienced lawyer from his team to the meeting. By the time everyone arrived, it was quite a large group: Friedel, Ralph, Jimmy, three lawyers, two accountants, three former students from DSS, Vaughan Schwartz, and me. Friedel spoke with great seriousness and expressed his concern about what was happening at the Mission. He asked those present to help me with the investigation.

Vaughan quickly prepared a legal document authorising me to act on Friedel's behalf to investigate the possible financial fraud, mismanagement, and other irregularities at the Mission. The accountants then asked Friedel if he gave them permission to hand over all the documents relating to KSB's finances to me, and he readily agreed. The power of attorney (POA) document was

drawn up and signed by Friedel, me, and a number of those present who served as witnesses. With that document, I had permission to investigate the alleged financial fraud and mismanagement taking place at KSB.

It was not Friedel's intention that I should replace him or take over his position in any capacity as trustee or director in any of the Mission's companies and organisations. Nor was I interested in any full-time involvement in the management of any of KSB's enterprises. Estelle had made it crystal clear that she would never go back to the Mission. She even went so far as to inform me that she would not join me even if I went back on short-term visits or if I became involved in some leadership capacity even on a temporary basis. My children also told me that if I accepted a role that would take me back to the Mission, I would have to go on my own. I promised them all that I would only be involved long enough to carry out Opa's wishes. That was back in June of 2019 and the battle with KSB is still ongoing until today.

The accountants informed us that they had had a lot of trouble obtaining the financial documents they needed from the Mission, as the leadership had refused to cooperate over the last sixteen years. They also provided details of the last meeting they had with the trustees at the Mission. After confronting them about their lack of cooperation and expressing concern about the irregularities in their financial records, Lidia Dube rebuked them, accusing them of standing in the way of "God's work." She even went so far as to tell them that they were working for the devil. The accountants brushed off her accusations and informed the trustees that it was their job to do everything necessary to prepare complete financial reports. After recounting their experience with me, they handed over all the documents. Armed with new information and the financial records, I returned home and began going over them thoroughly.

A few days later I received a phone call from Bishop Martin Frische. I had met him around the time that Radio Khwezi started, and I had stayed in touch with him when I worked for Radio Namaqualand as he was involved in Christian radio broadcasts as well. He offered to help me in investigations into KSB and suggested that I contact a retired Supreme Court judge named Eberhard Bertelsmann. I reached out to the judge and explained the situation we found ourselves in. He strongly advised me to involve the media as he felt it would be the best way to bring the issues to the attention of the South African government and elicit a response from them. At the time, I ignored the judge's suggestion and decided to contact the relevant government agencies myself. Together with Dr. Peet Botha, Gert van der Walt and Jimmy Stegen we tried in vain to find the support we needed. We were able to arrange meetings with senior officials from the South African Police, the National Prosecuting Authority, the Human Rights Commission, and the South African Revenue Service, but each time we were met with a degree of apathy. We just could not make the necessary impact to persuade them of the seriousness of our case.

53. Epilogue

After more than a year of trying, I realised we were making little progress. I had no choice but to follow Judge Bertelsmann's original suggestion. At the start of 2020, I happened to see a photo taken by Erika Bornman featured in a travel magazine and had called her to congratulate her. I realised that with her connections in the media world, she would be worth contacting again. She was eager to help and arranged a meeting with Adriaan Basson, the editor-in-chief at News24. After we met him in Cape Town, it became clear that Adriaan took the story very seriously. He appointed a team of journalists to help and, thus, "Exodus" was born. By the time News24's investigations were

over, they had produced a lengthy documentary, four podcast episodes and dozens of articles unearthing many of the problems at KSB. During the same time, Peet Botha reached out to the Mission's leadership and asked them to agree to a meeting that would be moderated by an independent third party. They ignored his requests. After the Exodus exposé was released, the floodgates opened as numerous former members of KSB began contacting us to share their stories of physical and sexual abuse during their time at the Mission. One weekend I received so many heartbreaking calls that I felt close to an emotional breakdown and spent most of that Sunday in tears. I contacted Peet and discovered he was similarly inundated with calls. We agreed that with further witnesses coming forward, it would provide an opportunity to gather testimonies and document them. I reached out to Erika again and she agreed to take over this aspect of our investigation.



Figure 62. The big hall at KSB burning. Some years back. Most probably where KSB will end up.

There is still a dedicated team from around the world working together as we try to seek justice for the victims of KSB. We stay in touch regularly and make decisions through mutual cooperation to decide on each new step. Unfortunately, KSB has

a lot of money, and has always been willing to use it to protect themselves. They have since opened several civil lawsuits, in addition to starting smear campaigns in the media to discredit the former members who spoke out against them.

When I first got involved in June 2019, I was hopeful that KSB's leadership would show enough humility to listen to our findings and show a willingness to engage in a reasonable manner. Unfortunately, that never happened, and they continued to demonstrate their usual level of elitism and contempt for anyone who would dare to question them. I naively hoped that there was a way to bring true reformation and lead the Mission back onto a Biblical path. But this always requires honesty and humility, which both the leaders and members at KSB failed to display at every turn. It is ironic, given KSB's constant emphasis on the confession of sin, that this is something they are unwilling to practice themselves. It became clear that former members of KSB only began to behave in truly Christian ways when they left "Jammerdal" and were freed from the blindness with which the entire community of KSB was struck. *(Most of the land owned by KSB is located on the farm called "Jammerdal". This name means "The valley of sorrow." It is a fitting name given what has been happening at KSB for decades.)*

And so, the battle with KSB continues. I am often asked how I manage to maintain a work schedule at my age. Between the solar power installations, sermons, lectures, missionary work in countries as far away as Kenya, and the investigations into the Mission, I am kept very busy. I know that the KSB matter is a joint effort. I am merely one cog in the machine trying to hold the leaders of the Mission accountable for the trail of destruction left over the last few decades. I am sure of this: the truth will prevail, even if it takes a long time to happen.

I would like to end with two quotes regarding KSB. The first comes from Dr. Colin Peckham, addressing the leadership of the Mission in February 1999:

"I would plead with the leadership as a friend coming alongside to help, not to let the whole movement slide into an unbiblical and exclusive organization. For your own sakes as a movement, for the sake of those who follow you without question, for the sake of those who will be influenced to enter the movement perhaps to their own woeful cost at a later date, for God's sake, please stop and look at the path along which you are taking the people."

The second quote comes from my master's thesis in which I investigated some of the problems in the leadership at KSB and their methodology. Writing in November 2003, I gave the following advice to the Mission:

1: That the secrecy around supernatural revelations be stopped immediately and that such revelations be openly shared and discussed in the congregations at KSB.

2: That KSB urgently address the management structure of the Mission and that a biblical, responsible church leadership be implemented. All the members must be involved in this.

3: That KSB immediately stop going their own way, ignoring other churches and Christian organizations and that they implement ecumenical interactions. They must also immediately stop looking down on other denominations and speaking negatively about Christians outside the KSB context.

4: That they return to the Bible and Christian Orthodoxy in testing all subjective spiritual experiences.

At the time of this writing, I realize that the only solution for the Mission is a path of sincere conversion and a return to God and

His Word. Only then can further disasters be averted. Sola Scriptura is the answer.

May God be merciful to the people of Kwa Sizabantu.



Figure 63. Preaching at a wedding on the beach.