

Tom and Marilyn Wilson ~ May/June '26



Thy mercy, O LORD, is in the heavens; and thy faithfulness reacheth unto the clouds. Psalm 36:5

Fifty years ago, at the end of May 1976, a small group of friends from Feasterville Baptist Church drove with us to the Philadelphia airport to say our goodbye as we boarded our flight to London. It was the first leg of our journey as we headed to South Africa, our new home. A few days later, we made our way to Southampton, where we embarked on one of the Union Castle ships that would get us to South Africa in seventeen days. Right on schedule, we arrived in the Durban harbor on the 14th of June.



We were eager to get to Newcastle, which had been determined to be the best place for our first church plant. Some of our mission leaders had done surveys of various towns and found that Newcastle was predicted to be the fastest-growing town in the country. Due to changes in the political and economic policies of the country that never happened, but we have never doubted God's plan and purpose. The church is still there today, being pastored by a South African who trained for ministry through Church Ministries Institute, a local church-based program for training pastors.

Very soon after arriving, God led us to a good used car that we loaded up with all our earthly possessions and made the six-hour drive to Newcastle.

Within six months of arriving in Newcastle, we were averaging over a hundred kids in Sunday school. Although at times we felt a bit taken advantage of (unsaved parents saw us as great babysitters on a Sunday morning), God was working, and several of those kids have been in full-time ministry here and around the world. Parents of some of these kids came to know the Lord many years later.

Debbie was the first person we led to the Lord in Newcastle at the age of 12. She and her husband have been involved in a church-planting ministry in the Cape Town area for many years.

In 1985, we moved to Benoni, a suburb of Johannesburg, to begin our second church plant. Now, a family of five is with lots of adjustments, being in a bigger city with barriers that we hadn't experienced in our more rural town.

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We didn't know anyone in Benoni when we arrived, and looking back today, it is nothing short of a miracle that there is a thriving, growing church that is committed to not only reaching their community for the Lord but has a burden to reach the world and has a missions budget that testifies to that.

Bill and Nina Meyer were the first missionaries supported by Newcastle and Benoni, and they continue to minister in the Cape Town area.

This is just a very brief glimpse of what God has been doing. The stories and testimonies racing through my mind right now are far too many to begin to put on paper. We will have to wait for heaven to tell all of those!



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People talk of the sacrifice I have made in spending so much of my life in Africa. Is that a sacrifice which brings its own blessed reward in healthful activity, the consciousness of doing good, peace of mind, and a bright hope of a glorious destiny hereafter?

Away with the word in such a view and with such a thought. It is emphatically no sacrifice. Say rather it is a privilege.

DAVID LIVINGSTONE

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We came to South Africa as inexperienced servants, very much clinging to the promise of God that He would build His church. He was faithful to his promise, and we are so thankful that he chose to use us.

Many of you have supported us this entire fifty years, and some joined later, but all of you have played a vital role in our ministry these past fifty years. We know that many of you have sacrificially given to support us, and we so appreciate your faithfulness. Many of our past supporters are now with the Lord and seeing the fruit that has been added to their account by the grace of God. You have been faithful too.

We desire to continue to serve God as He continues to give us so many opportunities. We love the promise of Psalm 92:14 - “they shall still bring forth fruit in old age.”

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