

VOLUME 6 | DECEMBER 2025

BETHLEHEM

magazine

Cultivating in South Africa

Cultivating and Nurturing: Delicate Work

INTERVIEW WITH FIELD WORKERS
MATHIAS AND MARIEKE

Volunteer in the Spotlight in South Africa

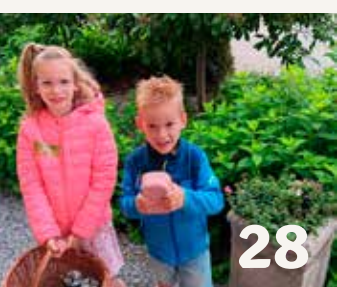
HOW THE WORK OF
STICHTING BETHLEHEM BEGAN



Bethlehem

from bread to the Bread

Contents



- 03 **Foreword**
- 04 **Interview** with Mathias Weststrate and Marieke Bakker
- 08 **Gaining Depth** on the Work Fields
- 16 **Typical South African Dish:** Chakalaka
- 17 **Volunteer in the Spotlight:** South Africa
- 18 **Photo Story**
- 20 **Children's Page**
- 21 **Questions to...**Children of Two Different Worlds
- 22 **News in Brief**
- 23 **Deputation for Missions and Evangelization**
- 25 **From the Board:** Cultivating the Field
- 26 **Entrepreneurs for Bethlehem**
- 28 **Help Us**
- 30 **Volunteer in the Spotlight:** the Netherlands
- 31 **Meditation:** Not slack, but strong hands!

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Prayer for Dew

I will be as the dew unto Israel (*Hosea 14:5a*)

In South Africa, dew is indispensable during dry periods. This became clear from a conversation I had with a white African years ago. I was driving with him across the prairie and saw a green bush in the midst of all the drought. I asked, "How is that possible?" He replied, "That's green drought. The dew provides enough moisture for this bush to stay green."

In God's Word, dew is a symbol of the work of the Holy Spirit, Who takes life from Christ and bestows it upon a withered sinner who has no life left in himself. Dew falls again and again. Where the dew of the Spirit has fallen, it remains active, even though it often seems bone dry. This gives hope for the often 'invisible' green drought on the mission fields. The dew falls at night. It is precisely at night that the Lord prepares His refreshments. This is encouraging, because in the fields of Bethlehem there are often 'nights' when Satan tries to disrupt the missionary work. The occult is often tangible and visible. The dew requires quietness. For when the wind blows, the dewdrops fall to the earth. Spiritual life also requires quietness. The inner chamber is necessary for encounters with the Lord and to taste His dewdrops. The Holy Spirit also works in quietness. "Not by might, nor by power, but by my spirit, saith the Lord of hosts." (Zechariah 4:6). Missionary work requires rest during the preparation and cultivation of the fields. In the morning sun, rainbows shine around the dewdrops. The colors of the rainbow reflect God's virtues. The blue speaks of God's faithfulness. The red refers to the blood of Christ, Whose head is filled with dewdrops. The yellow preaches the self-denial of the Holy Spirit, Who, according to God's good pleasure, continues to water His Church worldwide. The Holy Spirit is constantly at work glorifying Christ and ministering to the Church from His fullness. Where God's Word is, there the dew can fall. Even on the tiniest blade of grass that bends beneath the dewdrop. May the dew fall abundantly on

the fields of Bethlehem, so that the desert will blossom like a rose. Dew falls on living plants that drink in the dew. But also on iron poles that do not absorb the dew. What are you? A pole or a plant?

Without the Dew, all work in the fields is fruitless. In the way of God's providence, we carry out missionary work in South Africa. Daily, our workers minister to the local population in our work areas. In this magazine, you will meet Gerda van de Kamp, an African volunteer from the very beginning. You will receive a recipe for preparing Chakalaka. And don't forget to read the children's story about 7-year-old Betty from Refilwe to your (grand)children. Much has also been written about our projects. For example, in the interview with Mathias Weststrate and Marieke Bakker, titled 'Cultivating and Nurturing: Delicate Work.' In the contribution from our Deputation for Missions and Evangelization, Elder Van Bochove writes about cultivating 'field and vineyard.'

All of this requires financial resources. You have never put us to shame. Rather, we ask you to pray daily for the Dew to fall on the fields of Bethlehem so that many 'green droughts' may take root, grow, and flourish.



Rev. J.A. Weststrate, chairman



Cultivating and Nurturing: Delicate Work

Before flowers bloom and crops grow, sowing must first take place. The soil is prepared, seeds are planted, and then the young plants are cared for. This is the phase of cultivating and nurturing. This illustrates, among other things, what Stichting Bethlehem does in its work fields. Mathias Weststrate and Marieke Bakker are both involved with the Garden of Hope. We'll talk with them about their ways of cultivating and nurturing. We'll also speak openly and honestly about disappointments and lack of trust.

When asked what nurturing and cultivating means to them, Marieke replies, "For me, these two concepts are closely linked to relationships. I've been working here in South Africa for almost three years now

and have built many personal relationships with young people and women during that time. I often encounter young people on the street. The temptation of crime and drug use is strong among them. I try to gain their



“SUCH A PROCESS TAKES A LOT OF TIME, BUT A GOOD FUTURE IS WORTH SOMETHING. ESPECIALLY WHEN YOU HAVE PEOPLE'S SOULS IN MIND”



trust and help them with enrolling in a study program, for example. Gradually, the conversations become more open, and some become interested in the Bible classes. Such a process takes a lot of time, but a good future is worth something. Especially when you have people's souls in mind.”

Mathias nods. “If we’re honest, we notice that people are not eager to see us. They know where to find us when they’re in need. When it comes to personal, spiritual need, there's little trust and a lot of hesitation. Fortunately, there are also conversations about their salvation, often completely unexpected. These conversations often arise from pastoral conversations. For example, someone might be having marital problems, experiencing resistance in their family, or experiencing personal stagnation due to wrong choices. It takes

caution and wisdom to deal with these things. When you see that people understand, only if it is just intellectually, that they need a Surety for their sins and guilt, that brings great joy. You then wish that it may become a real need. Prayer for the Holy Spirit's influence and working is sorely needed.”

Accompanying people on life's journey

Both Marieke and Mathias, as well as the other workers in South Africa, sometimes spend extended periods of time with people during their life's journey. What are their experiences? “At the end of last year, I regularly spoke with a group of people about questions like 'What is saving faith?' and 'How do you know if you're born again?' Valuable personal conversations took place, and that's how the need arose to learn more about these types of topics. I now have the privilege of teaching a

group of 35 people about the Apostles' Creed. This way, you're very closely connected to people's hearts, and conversations about our poor soul condition arise," says Mathias.

Marieke also spends a lot of time with people. "In fact, there's even a South African woman, Lerato, with whom I have very good contact. She helps with translations and teaches me a lot about the local culture, traditions, and customs. This connection developed because I spent a lot of time visiting women and mothers during the first two years. By building relationships with these women, we sometimes have confidential conversations about family concerns, or they share traumatic experiences. Some of them eventually attended Bible classes and are now regulars. Tshegofatso is one of them. She faithfully reads the Bible and really wants to live according to God's Word."



Resisting the Devil

A well-known saying goes, "Where God builds His Church, Satan builds a chapel." Where seed is sown, the devil is active, nipping the seed or the seedlings in the bud. Mathias, "This is a bitter reality; you truly feel the



**“YOU’RE OFTEN LEFT
WITH EMPTY HANDS
AND A HEAVY HEART”**



presence of the evil one, sometimes terrifyingly so. 1 Peter 5:8 also says, “Be sober, be vigilant; because your adversary the devil, as a roaring lion, walketh about, seeking whom he may devour.” If you start one thing, a week later there's chaos due to bullying, hatred, and fighting. During meetings about God's Word, there are sometimes people present who pray against it. At such a moment, the evil one comes very close. There is an unpleasant, oppressive atmosphere. It's not always easy to continue. On the other hand, we may know that God's Word itself contains everything it takes to destroy these forces."

Marieke also experiences the pull of the devil during her work with young people. "I think of a boy who used to visit my classes, but suddenly I didn't see him anymore. I discovered he had been to a camp where boys are circumcised and taught how to be men. These

rituals are steeped in ancestor worship. It's very dark. I feel a lot of compassion for him. I still run into this boy on the street occasionally and chat, but sadly, the connection I had before is gone."

Prayer remains necessary

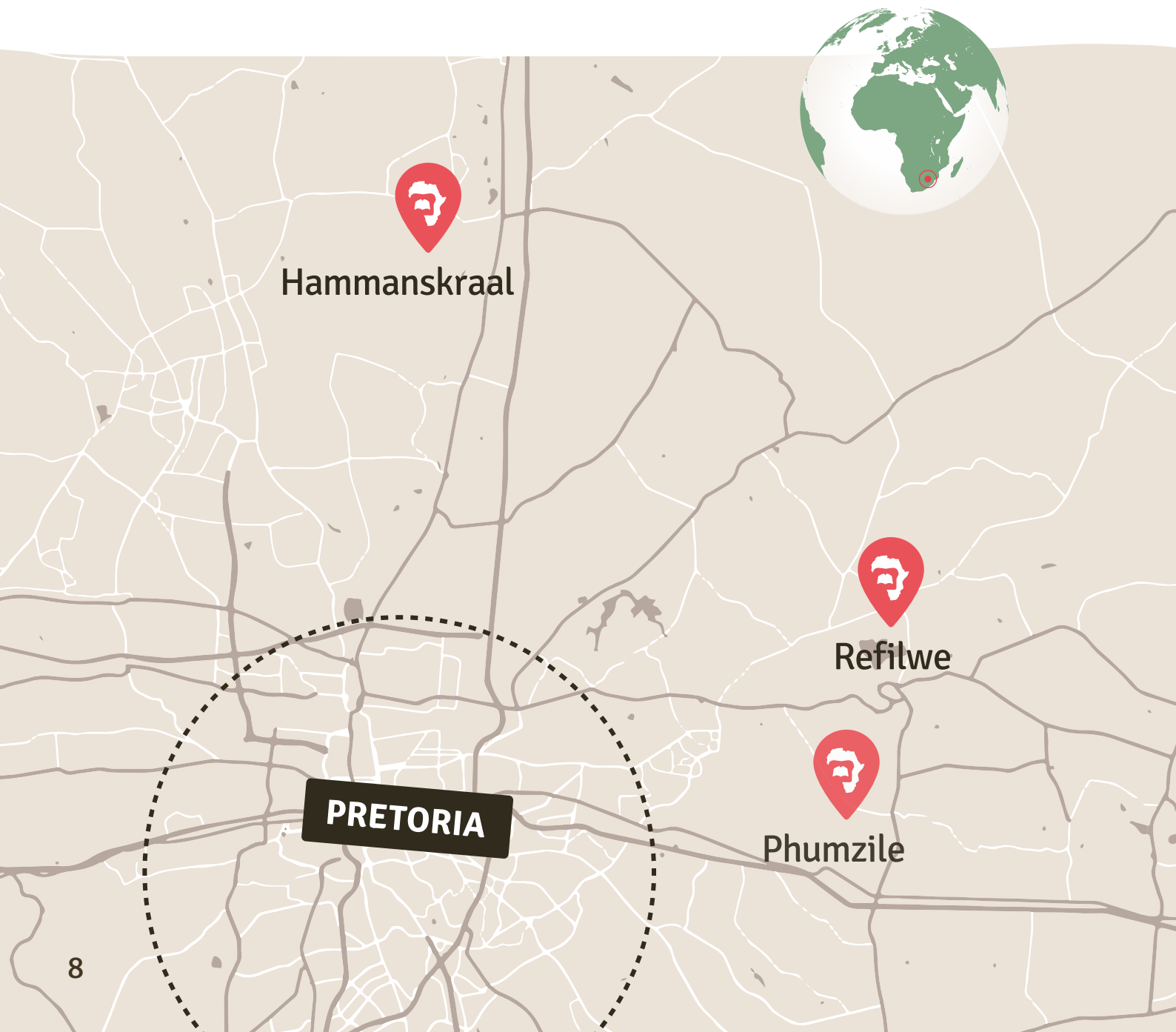
"Doing missionary work is a command from the Lord Jesus Himself," Mathias begins. "But honestly, it's difficult and sometimes disappointing. Especially when you look at yourself and your own shortcomings. You're often left with empty hands and a heavy heart. Yet, even when people leave, we try to maintain the relationship. It's important to let people feel that you truly care about them. For them, the pressure from their families is immense. Some literally have to choose: Bible class or family. That's not easy, because it asks everything of you. At such times, you see the fragility of our work. Without the Lord's help, this work wouldn't be possible!"

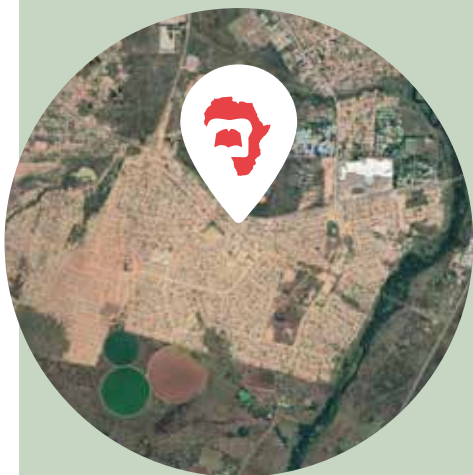
Marieke: "It's also difficult to truly get to know a population group. You never become one of them. We must continually keep in mind that it's about the well-being of their souls. Eternal rest can only be found in Him. And that's why I hope our prayer, and the prayer of our supporters in the Netherlands and Canada, may be, "Lord, may Thy Kingdom come with haste; Lay Satan's dark domain to waste!" For only then our work will bear fruit."



Gaining Depth on the Work Fields

The work areas of Stichting Bethlehem are located around the city of Pretoria. Through various projects, we provide employment, food security, and shelter. We do this primarily in the Hammanskraal, Refilwe, and Phumzile areas. By providing support in daily life, we create opportunities to share the Gospel.





Hammanskraal



Missionary work



Food



Health and welfare



Shelter



Mathias Weststrate, Georg Lindhoud, Marieke Bakker, Nella Verschuur

In Hammanskraal, we work at several locations:

- Garden of Hope. Unemployed mothers and grandmothers work here. They receive nutritious food and a food parcel once a month.
- The daycare center provides care for the children of mothers who work in the garden.
- Bible classes. In-depth Bible classes and catechism classes are held here three times a week. We start each day with Bible reading and a short meditation.
- The elderly home. Approximately 25 elderly people live in the elderly home. The field workers share God's Word during personal conversations.

- Tshwaraganang is an orphanage. Bible classes for children are held here twice a week.
- Safe House. Here we welcome women who have been victims of domestic violence. We offer a safe haven. The Safe House also offers Bible classes to people who work in the garden.

Target groups

- ✓ Children
- ✓ Grannies
- ✓ Community
- ✓ Single mothers
- ✓ Elderly people in need of help

Father

One day I was talking to Kgotthatso, a woman of about 35, in my estimation. She was looking for her biological father. Her mother had recently told her that her stepfather wasn't her real father. That was a huge shock. That revelation had a profound impact on her identity. Why had this been kept from her? Kgotthatso is looking for her biological father. Is he still alive? She has no idea.

And to think that there are so many here who don't know who their father is. Where do I come from? They know their mother, but their father? Could Kgotthatso's background also influence her

image of God? Shouldn't a father, as a priest in the family, by grace, reflect some of that image? The reality in our field is very different. Mothers often have constantly changing relationships. Children lack a stable man and father in the family. Or there are fathers who prefer the pub to their wives. And perhaps even lash out when they get home. What a blessing it is when there is a family where love and faithfulness are present. Unfortunately, that's the exception here. Once, when I spoke about God as Father, one of the women asked me afterward, "What do you mean by God as Father? What does a good father actually look



like?" Painful. Yet, we try to teach Who God is from God's Word. In all His attributes. His holiness and justice. But also His longsuffering and mercy. With the prayer in our hearts: may they come to know something of Thy love, Lord, as a Father who has compassion on His children (according to Psalm 103:13)?

Georg Lindhoud

Catechism Classes for Adults

At the end of 2024, several residents of Hammanskraal indicated they were looking for more in-depth education. Some of them struggled with questions such as: What is faith? What is the work of the Holy Spirit? What exactly does conversion entail? After several months of assessing their actual needs, we started catechism classes for adults. All these questions couldn't be answered during regular Bible classes, but they required separate, in-depth sessions.

Every Monday afternoon, there are approximately 35 regular participants. We discuss the Apostles' Creed, step by step. We started very simply: Who am I and how was I born? Who is God? What is our relationship to God? How does God see us? What does "I believe" mean, and how is this worked? But also, how do I experience the revealing work of the Holy Spirit, and what happens when the Lord begins to work in the heart of a sinner?

For the magazine, we talked with Maikel, Adelia, and Evelien.

What stood out most to you? "The lesson on Genesis 3:17, that because of our sins the earth is cursed. But also that God indicates in His Word that He is too Holy to associate with sinners, that can be found in Habakkuk 1:13. And that sin stands between us and the Lord, which is said in Isaiah 59:2. Sometimes we lose sleep over it, because we are not told this in our own churches. Sometimes we doubt, but there is still something that tells us it is true. That our hearts are sick with sin is actually the thing that has stuck with us most. Sometimes we would rather not come, like when it was about the day of judgment, but we were surprised that all hidden things will be revealed. Yet sometimes there is also comfort and encouragement. For example during the lesson on 1 Peter 3:18. The Just for the unjust. If faith is given in Christ, there is a way back to God, because of the work of His Son. It was a shock to hear that the natural man does not understand spiritual things. So we must be born again. But how?"

Mathias Weststrate





Two Roads

It's been over a year since we started a children's class at the Safe House. Every Friday afternoon, after school, the children gather there to listen to a Bible story, make a craft, and play together.



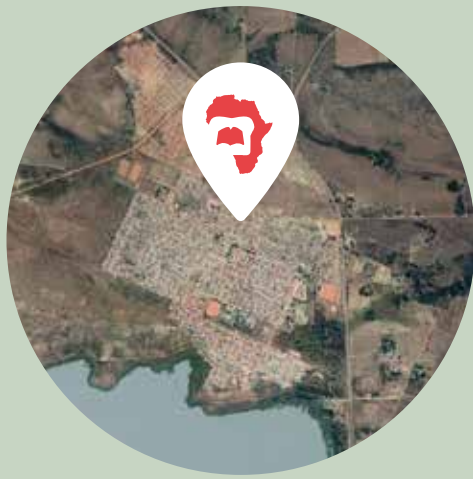
The children at the other locations already know a lot about the Bible. But for these children, everything is new. Often, I'm not even aware of how little they actually know. Unknowingly they are on their way to eternity...

I realized this once again when I asked them, "Where does our spirit go when we die?" Many hands were raised, and the answer was always, "To heaven." And so, thousands, millions of people travel on one of two roads to eternity. The following week, I asked the same question again. The children still remembered the Bible story from the week before. One little boy raised his hand and said very softly, "To hell." Those words echoed in my ears. Yes, I know: it's true. It's reality



unless a miracle takes place in our lives. The miracle of conversion, of faith. But there is still time! Yes, then I may also tell this little boy, and the other children, about the Lord Jesus, the only Way to salvation.

Nella Verschuur



Refilwe



Missionary work



Food



Health and welfare



Cees van den Bogert, Job Bolier, Lianne de Baat

Stichting Bethlehem is also active in Refilwe in various areas:

- Refilwe Orphan Care (ROC): This is an independent organization that helps orphans, but receives support from Stichting Bethlehem. The field workers share the Gospel with these children.
- Bible classes: Bible classes are held in various neighbourhoods.

- Home visits: We regularly visit children and adults at home to see what their living conditions are like. God's Word is always shared during these times.

Target groups

- ✓ Children
- ✓ Grannies
- ✓ Community
- ✓ Teenagers
- ✓ Single mothers

A Look in the Mirror

Indignantly, I drove my car through Refilwe. It was crowded. White tents blocked the road. Four funerals were taking place. One had already concluded, and they were busy with the 'after-tears': dressed in their finery, they were washing away their sadness with food, drink, and entertainment. Increasingly I realize that many horrors lurk behind these happy faces.. Drinking from that golden cup of poison, they are drunk with lies, infidelity, fraud, addiction, abuse, domestic violence, teenage pregnancies, and abortions. "But the wicked are like the troubled sea, when it cannot rest, whose waters cast up mire and dirt. There is no peace, saith my God, to the wicked" (Isaiah 57:20-21).

But the deep indignation was caused by something else this time. I passed a church that proclaims on its wall, 'Jesus Christ is Lord.' True enough, but in this case it is an example of obscene abuse! Paul- inflamed in his spirit – has once remarked, "in all things ye are too superstitious" (Acts 17:16-34 and annotation 33), but meanwhile so incredibly dark. His name is being misused for all sorts of shady purposes. People here

stagger in the midst of dozens of churches with their false prophets. The truth is fallen in the street (Isaiah 59:14). For a moment, my heart drops. People can't see the forest for the trees. In the midst of it, we may share the Gospel of Jesus Christ. In my mind, I take a look in the mirror. He looked around with anger (Mark 3:5), but my indignation so easily stems from self-importance. He was moved with compassion (Mark 6:34), but

my kindness is often as a morning cloud (Hosea 6:4). He was without sin (Heb. 4:15), but I am carnal, sold under sin (Romans 7:14). Oh, if He would not be angry and have mercy in my stead! If He would not have mercy on me! Alas, who then could stand? "But Thou dost pardon fully all our iniquity, That we may serve Thee truly and fear Thy majesty" (Psalter 44:2).

Job Bolier

The Light Shines Here

“When I first saw you, I thought: another man with a Bible. There are so many churches here, and there’s always room for one more. During the Bible classes at Tshepong, I did hear a difference, although I didn’t quite know what it was. I noticed that you called people to repentance, something I didn’t hear elsewhere. I saw that you were concerned and not just talking nonsense. When my health was failing, you took care of me. That touched me. That’s when I decided to go to the Bible class in Extension 10. There, the Bible was really explained; as far as I know, other churches don’t do that,” David begins.

Liesbeth agrees. “I wanted to become a traditional healer. You could see it in the banners at our gate. That’s the first thing that disappeared. The Bible classes really feel like home to me now. I feel ‘different’ there, I can’t quite explain it. The light of God’s Word shines there. I sometimes leave feeling very guilty. Then I cry out to the Lord at home, “Heal me!” I’m not talking about my body, but

about my soul. I hear about Jesus there. When I think of Him, I long to know Him as Healer and Savior. He died for the sins of His people. My sins too? What grace that would be! He makes me honest. I hope that our children, whom we care for, will also hear the truth and receive grace to repent. That they won’t follow my example of the past, but that they will learn to worship God in truth. Because this place is lost



and dark.” “During Bible classes, I also get to translate, and we also give Lianne language lessons by reading from the Bible. I’m so grateful for that. For me, this was something impossible. I grew up on a farm. My father died when I was only nine. That meant the end of my schooling. That I’m now able to speak English and use it in class is a miracle to me. I see this as a gift of grace,” says David.

David and Liesbeth from Refilwe

Bible Classes Make all the Difference

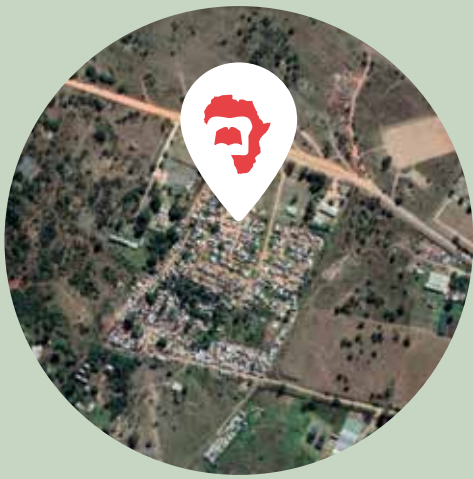
My name is Portia, manager at Refilwe Orphan Care. This organization collaborates with Stichting Bethlehem. We help orphans and the most impoverished children in the community. Every morning when I go to work, I think of my mother. She is the founder of the organization. It is her wish that we do everything for these children. This gives me courage to continue and strive for the best for these orphans.

A key verse for me is James 1:27. It tells us that we should visit orphans and widows in their affliction. God cares for orphans, so we must do the same. We want to protect them and give them what they need to develop. We do this not only by providing them with a meal every day, but also by helping them with their homework. Sometimes we help young people with their studies. We also want to support the families. They receive a monthly food parcel so they can cook at home. There are also Bible



classes for children, and I always encourage them to attend. These Bible classes make a difference in the children’s lives. For example, they learn how to pray. I would like to thank everyone in the Netherlands for all the prayers and support we receive. We are so grateful for this! May the Lord bless you.

Portia from Refilwe



Phumzile



Missionary work



Food



Cees van den Bogert, Job Bolier, Lianne de Baat

Phumzile is a slum where we focus on three things:

- Soup kitchen. 100 meals are distributed or delivered daily.
- Bible classes. A Bible class is held here weekly.
- Children's classes. Through activities, children are introduced to the Bible.

Target groups

- ✓ Children
- ✓ Teenagers
- ✓ Grannies
- ✓ Single mothers
- ✓ Community

Help Gives Hope

My name is Miranda. I work with colleagues from Stichting Bethlehem in Phumzile. Since this year, we have had our own plot of land that serves as a center for our activities. As a community, we are very happy with this.

Phumzile is not an easy place to live. Everyone comes here hoping for a better life, but this isn't always the case. Some just barely have a roof over their heads but struggle to get food every day. That's why we want this center on the new plot of land to offer support to people. We cook for the people every Monday and Friday. We are also working on starting activities for unemployed women, so they have something to do. At the same time, they experience a lot of stress. It's helpful if they have something to do during the day. We organize Bible studies for the children and adults. It's important that they know what the Bible says and that they know how to live. All of this is valuable to the community, and we are grateful for it. Stichting Bethlehem's help gives people in Phumzile hope. I want to thank them for their efforts! I hope and pray that God will bless them.

Miranda from Phumzile



Children as an Example

It's been a while since we last gave an update, by way of the magazine, on developments in Phumzile. We recently wrote that sufficient stability and mutual trust have developed in Phumzile to further develop our initiatives. The kitchen on the new plot of land is now finished and has been in use for some time. A daycare center has also been added to the same grounds. This daycare center is managed by a local woman from the community. In addition, we plan to set up something else that can function, among other things, as a classroom for evangelism for children.

Currently, the children's classes are held under a large tree on the grounds. Lianne teaches these classes twice a week at the 'new site' and once a week at the daycare center near the 'old kitchen.' These children's classes, like the adult Bible classes, are not linked to food aid, and attendance is voluntary. There is great interest among the children, and

it's a pleasure to see Lianne and Rebecca (translator) at work here. The adult Bible classes are taught twice a week by Job. Here, the children serve as examples for the adults, as interest among adults is significantly lower. Bible classes are also offered weekly for adults on the new grounds. Behind the scenes, the work continues in both soup kitchens. This is done

by volunteers, and it's good to see their faithfulness. Every evening, sandwiches are prepared for the schoolchildren and then distributed early in the morning, before the school buses depart. Despite the social injustices encountered in Phumzile, it's still remarkable to see the volunteers' dedication. In Phumzile, we experience what we read in Proverbs 22:2. But also that we all, rich and poor, have become "aliens from the commonwealth of Israel, and strangers from the covenants of promise, having no hope, and without God in the world." May the Lord make us all aware of this great poverty.

Cees van den Bogert



'Baie lekker!'

Chakalaka

Spicy South African Vegetable Dish

Chakalaka is a spicy vegetable relish from South Africa that's a must-have for any braai (barbecue). It's traditionally served as a side dish with pap (corn porridge), samp (cracked corn), rice, or a hearty meal. This colorful, flavorful dish can be enjoyed hot or cold, as a side dish or even as a main course.



Ingredients (serves about 6 people)

- 2 large onions, finely chopped
- 1 green bell pepper, diced
- 1 yellow bell pepper, diced
- 1 red bell pepper, diced
- 2 lbs. carrots, coarsely grated
- 4 large tomatoes, chopped
- 3 cans baked beans
- 4 Tbsp curry powder
- Salt and pepper to taste
- Additional spices to taste (e.g., garlic powder, barbecue spices, or garden herbs)

Preparation

1. Heat a drizzle of oil in a large pan.
2. Sauté the onion until glassy, then add the diced bell pepper.
3. Add the curry powder and sauté briefly for extra flavor.
4. Add the grated carrots and sauté for another minute.
5. Stir in the tomatoes and season with salt and pepper.
6. Cover the pan and let it simmer for 5 minutes.
7. Add the cans of baked beans and your favorite spice mix. Stir well.
8. Cover and let it simmer for another 10 minutes.

**DELICIOUS
WITH A BBQ,
BUT ALSO
SURPRISINGLY
GOOD WITH RICE
OR FOR LUNCH**

Serve hot or cold.

Enjoy



How the Work of Stichting Bethlehem Began...

My name is Gerda van de Kamp. I'm married and have eight children. I live in South Africa, near the city of Pretoria. We attend church in the congregation of Silverton.

Around 2018, I became involved in Mrs. Weststrate's work. At that time, it wasn't yet a foundation, but a personal initiative primarily focused on works of compassion. For example, Mrs. Weststrate gave sewing lessons to certain women. We also tried to support the white population in Danville. One thing led to another. For example, our domestic helper asked if we could do something in Refilwe. She knew Refilwe well because she lived there. There were many elderly women caring for their grandchildren but barely making ends meet. That's how we came into contact with Mma Evelyn. She cared for orphans, and that's how we started supporting that initiative, which we continue to do today. Refilwe Orphan Care was born from Mma Evelyn's work. We still collaborate with this organization through Stichting Bethlehem.

Initially, I accompanied Mrs. Weststrate and made sure there was enough food. I also replaced the gas cylinders so they were always able to cook. I was able to support Mrs. Weststrate in this way because I was familiar with the culture and language. Eventually, we both felt a desire to do something for the elderly women and young mothers, something that would bond them. So we started craft classes. Every month, several elderly women from the community gather to knit or crochet, and share a meal afterwards. A member of the team of Stichting Bethlehem opens the meeting with a simple meditation and explains God's Word.

Later, the community work expanded. Mrs. Weststrate and I then began distributing Biblical literature together and holding simple meetings. We gave school shoes or uniforms to children who needed them in order to attend school. When Rev. and Mrs. Weststrate returned to the Netherlands, I continued to provide practical support for a long time until more colleagues joined Stichting Bethlehem.

We hope that this work, which began so simply, will be a great blessing.



No School



Are you coming to Refilwe with us? We're visiting Betty today.
Betty is a girl of about seven years old. Look at the pictures and read along!



Hi, I'm Betty. I live in Refilwe. Here you see me standing in front of the place where I live. The green house belongs to my grandfather. The gray house belongs to me, my brother, and my aunt. My mother doesn't want to take care of us anymore. She left. Now my grandfather takes care of us. But an aunt lives here now, too. She cooks for us. I'm glad she's here, because my grandfather can't take care of us on his own.



Look, Grandpa only has one leg. He was bitten by an animal a long time ago. Then poison got into his blood. At the hospital, they cut off his whole leg. Do you see what we're eating? Avocados. They grow in abundance on the trees here. My grandfather eats the avocado with a spoon, and I get to scrape out the last bit.



This is my brother. His name is Banele. My brother has a problem with his eyes. But there's no money to go to the doctor. Sometimes there's no money for food either. Then we just eat a little corn porridge, without vegetables or meat. Do you know what my little brother has in his hands? The Bible. We're going to Bible class now. Are you coming too?



Every Tuesday, a white lady comes. She picks us up. We appreciate that! I'm supposed to go to school during the day. Only, I didn't get any paperwork when I was born. It is called a birth certificate. And without that paperwork, you're not allowed to go to school. I think that's a shame, because I really want to learn!



5

Thankfully, I do learn something when I go to Bible class. The white woman brings along a Bible with pictures. She tells about Noah, Moses, Joseph, and the Lord Jesus. I learn a lot from that. I often still remember the story perfectly the following week. Then I can retell it. We also colour together. That's really nice!



6

I'm really tired after colouring! I went to bed late last night. That's because I take care of my grandpa and little brother in the evenings. My grandpa can't walk, and my little brother can't see well. So, you understand why I help out a lot. That's why I often nap for a bit during the day. My coat gives me some shade. Handy, isn't it?



7

But today my little brother wants to sleep for a while as well. He snuggles up to me and wants to be under my coat. That wakes me up. So, I put his head on my lap and give him my coat. Now he has a blanket and stays a little warm.



8

Bible class is over. I quickly get back into the white lady's car. I enjoy driving in the car. We get home quickly over the bumpy road. Hey, that's nice! I can see myself in the mirror. Do you see me too? I wave at you in the mirror one more time. Bye!

A crossword puzzle grid is shown on a light orange background. The grid consists of white squares with black borders. There are 11 numbered starting points for words: 1 (top right, vertical), 2 (top left, vertical), 3 (top center, vertical), 4 (middle left, horizontal), 5 (middle right, vertical), 6 (middle left, horizontal), 7 (middle right, vertical), 8 (bottom left, vertical), 9 (bottom center, horizontal), 10 (bottom left, horizontal), and 11 (bottom center, horizontal). The grid is designed for a 10x10 puzzle.

8. Do the ... of an evangelist.
(2 Tim. 4:5).

N	C	W	O	R	D	O	O	F	S	M	U	L	S
E	H	A	M	M	A	N	S	K	R	A	A	L	B
E	R	A	C	U	L	T	R	F	I	G	V	I	A
D	T	M	M	I	S	S	I	O	N	S	B	I	F
C	H	I	L	D	R	E	N	I	O	L	N	O	I
S	G	S	A	M	L	F	N	E	E	P	U	N	E
P	M	S	E	D	E	E	A	C	D	N	D	W	L
I	Y	I	S	L	P	H	L	H	D	R	L	N	D
R	L	O	S	O	I	A	E	A	T	I	A	B	W
I	R	N	Y	S	S	Z	T	L	F	U	I	G	O
T	E	A	L	S	I	I	M	E	H	B	O	U	R
U	D	R	U	I	O	O	R	U	L	T	R	S	K
A	L	Y	O	N	F	T	N	E	H	U	E	R	E
L	E	I	S	N	R	E	Y	A	R	P	G	B	R

BETHLEHEM	FOOD	PHUMZILE
BIBLE	FOUNDATION	POOR
BIBLE CLASS	GARDEN	PRAYER
CARE	HAMMANSKRAAL	REFILWE
CHILDREN	LIFE	SLUMS
DAY OPENING	MISSION	SOUL
ELDERLY	MISSIONARY	SOUTH AFRICA
FIELD WORKER	MISSIONS	SPIRITUAL
FIELDS	NEED	WORD

[illegible]

Questions to...

1. WHO ARE YOU AND CAN YOU BRIEFLY TELL US SOMETHING ABOUT YOURSELF?

My name is Bokamoso Mashaba and I'm 12 years old. I'm a girl from Phomolong (a neighborhood in Hammanskraal). I really enjoy going to Bible classes. If something is wrong at home, I tell the Lord everything. That's what I've learned.

2. HOW DO YOU FEEL ABOUT HEARING FROM THE BIBLE EVERY DAY?

I love it when Teacher Marieke tells stories, like those about Joseph and Moses. These stories teach me a lot about sin and about good things. Teacher Marieke tells us to ask the Lord for a new heart.

3. WHAT WOULD YOU LIKE TO SAY TO A TEENAGER IN THE NETHERLANDS WHO ATTENDS THE CHURCH SERVICES?

I would like to tell the children in the Netherlands about the Lord Jesus. That He died on the cross for the sins of His children. I would also tell them that we must ask the Lord for forgiveness and that we must receive a new heart.



1. WHO ARE YOU AND CAN YOU BRIEFLY TELL US SOMETHING ABOUT YOURSELF?

My name is Lourens Hakvoort. I'm 9 years old and am in grade 4. I absolutely love fishing, and using the metal detector to find coins is also fun. I collect bottles to give bread to needy children. This year, we've raised €1,613 thanks to all the kind people from our congregation!

2. HOW DO YOU FEEL ABOUT HEARING FROM THE BIBLE EVERY DAY?

I think it is nice and I am grateful that I can listen to the Bible every day.

3. WHAT WOULD YOU LIKE TO SAY TO TEENAGERS IN SOUTH AFRICA WHO ATTEND THE BIBLE CLASSES?

You should be very grateful that you can hear stories from the Bible. Because there are also countries where it's not allowed. You'll even be imprisoned for it.





Opening of Safe House

On August 8th, the Safe House was inaugurated. A lot of people from the community and government officials attended. There were approximately 100 visitors, and everyone had the opportunity to admire the building. Rev. Weststrate opened the day with a sermon from Psalm 46:2. Mma Catherine spoke to all the visitors about the origins and purpose of the Safe House: a safe place where abused women and teenagers can stay for a period of time. Manager Difou thanked everyone who had contributed to making this center possible. The day concluded with a delicious meal.

Water Problems at the Garden of Hope

Recently, we had to dig a new well. The current water sources were no longer sufficient. After some testing, we discovered that the yield was too low. Everything is now functioning properly again, and there is enough water for drinking, cooking, irrigation, and also for the nursing home.

Self-sufficient vegetable gardens

Unemployment in South Africa is high. During the day, you see men wandering around the townships. In recent months, small groups of these men have learned how to start their own vegetable plants and how to make compost. In this way we are trying to create



self-sufficient vegetable gardens in Hammanskraal.

Renovation of the Community Hall Completed

In our April newsletter, we asked for donations for the renovation of the community hall at the Garden



of Hope. This project has now been completed. Windows and doors have been installed, the kitchen has been tiled, and heated running water has been installed. All the walls have been repainted, and any damaged parts have been repaired. The hall is now used weekly for meetings around God's Word.

Difela Songbook

Singing is something people in South Africa enjoy. For this reason, we have compiled a simple songbook together with the local people. Most of these songs are from an existing South African songbook. This way, we can sing songs together before and after the meetings, some of these are based



on the Psalms or specific Bible passages.

Bible Education for Children in Phumzile

Since last year, we have started providing Bible education to children in the slum of Refilwe.



Twice a week, field worker Lianne de Baat gathers a group of children from this slum. Each time, there are about 30-40 children. Besides Bible stories, they learn songs like "Now I lay me down to sleep," as well as a simple prayer.

Cultivating Field and Vineyard

It's remarkable that the books of Moses devote considerable attention to the cultivation and nurturing of fields and vineyards. But fields and vineyards are also spoken of in the Bible as examples of God's Church on earth, which must be nurtured and cultivated. What lessons can we draw from this for missionary work?

For example, we read in Leviticus 19:19, "Thou shalt not sow thy field with mingled seed." This also applies to a vineyard (Deuteronomy 22:9). Isn't this also true, figuratively speaking, for the mission field? There is only room for the pure message of God's Word, unmixed with pagan elements like ancestor worship. Three years ago, I wrote in this magazine about the dangers of this mixture.

The prophets speak of the people of Israel as a vineyard or a field. In Isaiah 5:4 we read, "What could have been done more to my vineyard, that I have not done in it? wherefore, when I looked that it should bring forth grapes, brought it forth wild grapes?"

The Lord Jesus spoke often about the church on earth as a field or a vineyard. God Himself cares for it. Consider the parables of the sower, and the tares among the wheat. In another parable (Matthew 21), the Lord Jesus spoke of His Father as a "householder, which planted a vineyard, and hedged it round about, and digged a winepress in it, and built a tower, and let it out to husbandmen, and went into a far country." Things do not end well for the unfaithful husbandmen.

God Himself cares for His field and vineyard, but He uses people (husbandmen) to plow, sow, till, and cultivate the field. Thus, the mission field is also a field that needs to be tended and cultivated. When we speak of 'husbandmen,' we primarily think of missionaries. It should be our constant prayer that the Lord would also call and send a pastor (missionary)

to our mission field. But missionary workers and field workers also have an important role in the care and labour on the mission field. Young plants need water and fertilizer. This is achieved by sharing God's Word in meditations and by guiding people and showing them the way in personal conversations, using the Bible and the Scriptural and experiential truth based on it as a starting point.

In the aforementioned parable, the Lord Jesus pointed out the great responsibility the husbandmen bear in tending His vineyard.

We must always remember that only God can give increase and fruit. As Paul writes in 1 Corinthians 3:6, "I have planted, Apollos watered; but God gave the increase."

May the Lord crown the labours of missionary workers and field workers in the fields of Bethlehem with His blessing. Even though increase and fruit seem to be lacking, the Lord knows what is good. He is in control and fulfills all things in His time.

A.C. van Bochove

Secretary Deputation for
Missions and Evangelization





Cultivating the Field

Daily, the seed of the Word is sown in the fields. The field is cultivated, knowing that only the Lord can give increase through the working of His Spirit.

It is frequently discussed how the Biblical message should be worded in the context of missionary work. Superficial faith, widespread ignorance, ancestor worship, and the palpable influence of demons all influence the message being delivered. But there are more factors that significantly impact the context in which the message is delivered.

Think about the vast differences between Western and African cultures, the broken families, rampant crime, high unemployment, poverty, addiction, and prostitution as almost common phenomena, the tensions between blacks and whites, the corruption, the language barriers, the phenomenon of bread Christians, and much more! All of this makes sharing the message of God's Word a very difficult task. It is always true that the Word is only effective when God's Spirit empowers it. It is always a divine miracle when a sinner is born again. This is just as true in South Africa as it is in the Netherlands and Canada. Yet, anyone who considers

the context in which the Word is shared in South Africa realizes that there are significant obstacles. However, Psalm 72 offers hope in these circumstances: "There shall be an handful of corn in the earth upon the top of the mountains; the fruit thereof shall shake like Lebanon: and they of the city shall flourish like grass of the earth" (v. 16). Our workers sow only a handful of corn; it seems like an impossible task. But the Lord guarantees the fruits. Sometimes we see little of it. But the fruit will shake like Lebanon. From God's side, it is possible for fruit to be seen in the most unlikely places. And that is why the work must continue. In the hope that it may be blessed!

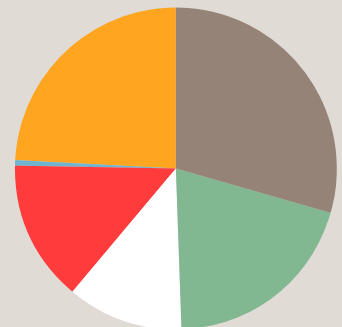
G.R. van Leeuwen, secretary



From the treasurer

Below you find a simple overview of the income from January 1 to September 30, 2025. Thank you very much for your donations! Above all we thank the Lord.

◆ Private Individuals	€ 236,499
◆ Businesses	€ 158,987
◆ Collections	€ 92,057
◆ Fundraisers for Bethlehem	€ 113,205
◆ Sales	€ 5,134
Total fundraising	€ 605,882
◆ Contributions Canada	€ 191,401
Total income through September	€ 797,283





Entrepreneurs' Meeting

On Wednesday evening, April 9, 2025, Stichting Bethlehem's business network visited Tuincentrum Van der Spek in Zevenhuizen. There was a good turnout: over 70 entrepreneurs, partners, and colleagues gathered for a dinner to reflect on the work in South Africa.

At 6:30 PM, we were welcomed by Gert Hop, fundraising board member and chairman of the business network. Rev. Weststrate opened the evening. Psalms filled the garden center. After the opening, a live connection was made with Mathias Weststrate, general manager in South Africa. He explained the activities facilitated by Stichting Bethlehem.

He also announced a new project. Stichting Bethlehem aims to help local men make good use of their time and helps them learn to start vegetable plants. These plants can then be used in the Garden of Hope. The vegetables are used for cooking, and the remainder is distributed. This way, the men can support themselves and also

come into contact with God's Word through the Bible classes held there. Mathias concluded with the wish that this may be blessed unto their hearts.

After the appetizer, Ton van der Spek, co-owner of Tuincentrum Van der Spek, had the opportunity to talk about the family business's growth: from a small greengrocer to a garden center spanning no less than 10,000 m².

Once everyone had finished their main course, missionary worker Georg Lindhoud appeared on screen via a live feed. He shared something with the entrepreneurs about his rewarding, yet challenging. He explained, among other things, that the missionary team

faces considerable opposition due to the prevailing worship of ancestors.

Over a delicious dessert, the entrepreneurs joined forces and collectively pledged an impressive €16,000 for the new project Mathias had mentioned. A truly astonishing amount. We thank you all, and above all we thank the Lord!

Reverend Weststrate closed the evening, and Gert Hop thanked the Van der Spek family for their warm welcome. There was ample opportunity for networking during the reception that followed.

“It is the Lord who gives us the opportunity to support missionary work.”



Entrepreneur Aart van der Jagt is the former owner of the Van der Jagt Group. This construction company specializing in demolition, concrete drilling and cutting, was founded by his father about 65 years ago. Aart joined the company about 45 years ago and was able to expand it. There are two locations: Krimpen aan den IJssel and Kapelle (Zeeland). The company has since been passed on to his son, Adriaan.

WHAT WAS THE REASON FOR BECOMING A MEMBER OF STICHTING BETHLEHEM?

“A few years ago, I attended a presentation of Stichting Bethlehem. When I heard the story, it touched me, and I spontaneously joined the business network. I don't regret it.”

WHAT DOES THE INVOLVEMENT ENTAIL?

“I sense the great need of the foundation, with its many important missions in far-off South Africa. My wife and I feel we cannot ignore this. We are happy that there are foundations that can help these people. Stichting Bethlehem is one of them and aligns with our Christian identity. Let me be clear: it's not about our own contribution or personal involvement, because

it is the Lord who gives us the opportunity to support missionary work.”

WHY IS IT IMPORTANT FOR ENTREPRENEURS TO JOIN?

“Together we are stronger. Every contribution counts. You can become a member of Stichting Bethlehem and choose from attractive business packages. It's very transparent, and you can see what happens to the money. I advise those interested to read the newsletters and request information from other members of the business network. And who knows, I hope we might meet at one of the upcoming business evenings.”



Help Us

In recent months we have been delighted, as a foundation, with wonderful proceeds from all kinds of fundraising activities. This season, many children also contributed by taking part in fundraising. This proves once again that anyone can help! On this page, you'll find a selection of the activities that were organized last season. **We sincerely thank you for your contribution, and above all we thank the Lord!**

On the Bike

Jonathan Wisse and Jurrian Herrebout participated in a sponsored bike ride for Stichting Bethlehem during the summer holidays. The cousins cycled 1,000 kilometers and raised a fantastic €2,400.



Selling Honey

Sofie (8) and Joas (4) van Eldik from Ochten raised €50 for Stichting Bethlehem by selling honey. What an original idea!

50th Anniversary

HKV, a supplier of workwear, PPE, tools, road marking, advertising, and signage, is celebrating its 50th anniversary. Instead of gifts, they asked their contacts to donate to a good cause, including Stichting Bethlehem. A total of €3,825 was donated to Stichting Bethlehem.





Chores for a Good Cause

Rik van den Broek rolled up his sleeves and raised €100 by doing chores, from emptying the dishwasher to picking blackberries and cleaning vegetables. Who will follow his example?



Coffee Afternoon in Urk

In September, the annual coffee afternoon benefiting Stichting Bethlehem took place at the Menorahkerk in Urk. Thanks in part to a good turnout and the help of our younger generation, this enjoyable afternoon raised the nice amount of €4,535.

Sale

On Saturday, October 4th, a sale was held in Krimpen aan den IJssel. A wide variety of items were for sale: vegetables, fruit, cheese, and handmade products. A total of over €5,000 was raised for Stichting Bethlehem.



Opening of Catechism Season

Friday evening, September 19th, was the opening of the catechism season in 's-Gravendeel. Our presenters gave a presentation about the work of Stichting Bethlehem. The collection, which was donated to the foundation, amounted to €4,189.05.



Inspired?

You too can help by organizing a fundraiser for our fellow human beings in South Africa. With the money you raise, we can help them with food and tell them about the living Bread!

Have you organized a fundraiser as well?

Send a picture to info@stichtingbethlehem.nl so we can publish it on our website.

Former Board Member Wim Korevaar Resigns, But Remains Involved

Enthusiastic and committed. These are two qualities that characterize 71-year-old Wim Korevaar from Elspeet. Since 2018, he and his wife, now deceased, served as presenters for Stichting Bethlehem. "I was also a board member for several years. I officially stepped down in June. Unofficially, I still regularly fill in as presenter."



Initially, after an earlier visit to the Weststrate family in Pretoria, Wim planned to go to South Africa after retirement. "I spent eight days in South Africa in 2016. Together with the Reverend and Mrs. Weststrate and other relatives from Elspeet, I visited Hammanskraal. The people's way of life and the (spiritual) poverty were left an impression. I promised the family that I would come to South Africa after my retirement. Only... I still had to discuss it my wife. When I did, once back home in the Netherlands, she replied, "I will follow you." Things turned out quite differently; Ria died suddenly three months after they both retired. Wim decided to stay in the Netherlands with his children and grandchildren.

GIVING PRESENTATIONS

"When Pastor Weststrate accepted the call to Elspeet, we saw that he and his wife were giving a lot of presentation for Stichting Bethlehem. And their ministry also demanded a lot of them. We offered

to help them with the presentations, and that's how we both became presenters. We now have several volunteers that are active throughout the Netherlands." The former teacher and primary school principal, a born instructor, enjoyed giving numerous presentations throughout the Netherlands. "I attended congregational meetings, youth and women's groups, nursing homes, schools, and so on. It was really enjoyable!"

Once a year, Wim visits Pretoria for three months, where Stichting Bethlehem Foundation's working areas are located. "I occasionally go out with the field workers as a presenter and always enjoy being among the local people. During the COVID pandemic, I facilitated several Bible classes."

EATING WITH YOUR HANDS

Wim, who loves things neat and tidy, had to adjust a bit when he first visited South Africa. "People in the townships live on the streets a

lot, throw their trash on the ground, and the traffic in Hammanskraal, for example, is complete chaos." Laughing he continues, "Eating with a knife and fork isn't part of the culture either. People eat with their hands. And I had to do that as well during a Christmas dinner. It was a bit awkward at first, but I soon realized it wasn't as 'dirty' as it seemed. A quick wash of hands afterward, and that's it."

Although Wim has officially retired, he remains involved in the foundation's presentations as a substitute. "Despite the fact that I think it's important for the younger generation to take over the work, I'm happy that I can still make a difference, even at my age. I hope that the work in South Africa and here in the Netherlands will be blessed. The people of South Africa need the miracle that needs to happen to us here just as much."

Not Slack, But Strong Hands!

FEAR THOU NOT: AND TO ZION, LET NOT THINE HANDS BE SLACK. LET YOUR HANDS BE STRONG. *Zephaniah 3:16b; Zechariah 8:9a*

Dear Reader,

Differing views and opinions of people, even of God's people, can cause stifling states of confusion and bewilderment. The failure to see the fruit of our labours or the encounter with insincerity and envy can cause our hands to be feeble. Instead of feeling the need to look upward, we focus on fearful circumstances and are therefore unfit for our work. There is nothing worse imaginable for missionaries and all who labour in God's vineyard than to let their hands be slack. Fierce opposition and the lack of blessing in labour are interpreted as evidence that Christ's kingdom is full of adversity. Jealousy and talking behind someone's back can cause you to lose courage. Satan silently applauds these feelings, stokes the fires of unbelief, and delights in it when it seems that Christ's kingdom is being undermined. Yet, Christ always remains infallible in His own work. His kingdom knows no adversity but only prosperity (Isaiah 53:10).

It has always been Satan's work to discourage God's people and cause their hands to go slack. We see this also in the time of the prophet Zephaniah, who carried out his ministry before the Babylonian exile. This was no less true in the time of the prophet Zechariah, who lived after the Babylonian exile. However, the Lord commissioned the prophet Zephaniah to encourage the people. "Fear thou not: and to Zion, Let not thine hands be slack." But the prophet Zechariah also had to

cry out to the fearful and exhausted workers, "Let your hands be strong." Do not lose heart or slacken in your zeal to serve the Lord. Therefore, go forward in Christ's strength, for "God is our refuge and strength, a very present help in trouble" (Psalm 46:1).

Christ also encourages the labourers today to put their hands to the plow! Christ strengthens your hands through His hands, which were pierced when He hung on the cross. They are not only the refuges to protect His people, but also the honeycombs through which the sweet drops of honey drip of His merits. You will receive new strength and courage to continue the work to which you are called. Do not overestimate your mortal enemies, and do not underestimate your Lord. He cares for His honour and will sustain His work. Do your work and leave the fruit to the Lord. He does everything in His own time. Every sinner whose sins are revealed by His Word and Spirit will be saved by free grace as the fruit of God's good pleasure in Christ. Learn to plead, "Lord, convert me daily, deal with me as Thou pleasest, and cause me to walk closely with Thee. Ebenezer."

Rev. J. Roos

Barneveld



Cultivating in South Africa



YOU CAN HELP!



Donations can be made via e-Transfer to our email address: info@bethlehemfoundation.ca, by cheque to the church with “Bethlehem Foundation” on the memo line, or scan the QR-code.

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