



May 2018

Dear Family and Friends,

Greetings from a wet Heideveld!!!! In our family we love to read missionary stories. We are encouraged to hear of how the Lord uses ordinary people for his glory, we take courage in God's provision, we are reminded to pray. These stories make good adventure books in and of themselves, but read through the eyes of faith, they are incredible testimonies of God's work in the world. They teach us about diverse cultures and how the gospel transcends all. These stories speak into our context too. Where we are lacking courage to live radically, when we are tired, when our funds are drastically low, when we see endless suffering. We read God's word and we read the lives of Christians bravely following Christ around the world through the centuries – we are strengthened and are once more convicted of the call.

This last quarter we have felt the uncertainty a bit more keenly – with regards to Arise and the significant financial challenges, with regards to St. Thomas with Gary and Velma called to serve in Stellenbosch and indeed with the lack of rain in our city. We remind ourselves of the most spoken command to Jesus to his disciples - 'do not be afraid' - and instead to call upon the Lord who answers prayer.

For those of you who have been watching the weather forecast in Cape Town, we are very thankful for the start of the winter rains – May 2018 has definitely been wetter than this time last year. Whilst we will remain on severe water restrictions for several months yet, we are grateful that 'Day Zero' seems to have been averted for now. Praise Him!

We have missed Gary and Velma as Heideveld is desperate for more gospel workers and we recognise our own limitations acutely. With Alun preaching in the morning service, we have been unable to run a youth programme on Sundays (although the Friday youth bible study continues). That said, our hearts are encouraged that ministry continues at St. Thomas. The senior bible study is booming this year with seven new members since January. Alun led a new church council last Sunday with three new members – each one we have watched mature in their faith over the last decade or so. Thrilling!

Here is another story that encourages our hearts this season. M (11yrs) and T (8yrs) were first identified through our after school bible club (at the time ran by Arise and handed over to St. Thomas a few years ago). They came to the Family Centre and took part in some of the groups there. The girls currently live five minutes from our house in very poor accommodation with "grandparents" aged 78 and 82yrs. Their beds are in what would be the living area - you have to walk sideways to squeeze through. This frail couple look after five children - four come to our programmes. I can hardly describe the level of trauma they have been through - abandonment, murder of family members, abuse, addiction. Through Arise and now jointly with St. Thomas, the girls are part of a thriving Sunday School, they are good friends with our daughter Ilana, they are the first to sign up for any events we run. The eldest is hoping to be one of the 16 or so that we want to send on camp in August. We have been able to find partners in one of the wealthy churches to provide them with a fridge (yes, they didn't have one!) and regular food donations. Most excitingly, their grandmother recently joined Alun's senior bible study group and has spoken of her joy in finding the Lord so late in life. She has been in church almost every Sunday since the beginning of the year - the children have been for years now. Whilst the girls remain super-vulnerable, we have been able to work holistically with this family. These girls are a testimony to the way the Lord is using Arise and St. Thomas to make his name known. We covet your prayers for them.

Arise is facing substantial financial challenges at a time that our Family Centre has never been busier. Since January we have had an unprecedented number of intakes – this is people in crisis that turn up on the doorstep of the Family Centre requesting assistance. We have had 70 individual clients in the last four months,

each bringing situations of child abuse, gang violence, substance abuse and other trauma. 35% of these clients have needed to be referred for statutory intervention because of the severity of the situation. With some generous donations, alongside major cutbacks (both salaries and expenditure), restructuring and hard work from the staff and board, we have been able to commit to keeping the Family Centre open, something that was uncertain. **Rejoice!** Nonetheless we are urgently praying for more Arise Champions – monthly donors – partnering with us in this vital work. Please do get in touch if you would like to receive more information about this – giving details can also be found below. You can follow Arise's work by **liking our facebook page** – AriseCapeTown. This grassroots work in the community is so critically important, as alongside St. Thomas we seek to proclaim the gospel both in word and deed. To add to a challenging season, Arise (and St. Thomas) has had repeated break-ins (the result of which meant our computers were stolen); our website vanished on 7 May and is currently being recovered. Despite a string of obstacles, we refuse to stop reaching out and fighting for the most vulnerable.

Finally, a word from our own family. Likhona and Debbie have nearly finished their first year of homeschooling together. It has been a very good year for them, with a curriculum (Sonlight) made for Likhona's learning style. With many out-of-the-home opportunities to continue to be involved in sport, woodwork, camps, and church life, Likhona is learning a lot and maturing daily. Ilana loves school with her highlights being choir, art, Afrikaans, and tuck shop! Malachi begs for another chapter of his book both first thing in the morning and last thing at night; his world is opening up as he begins to read. Timothy is by far the most verbal toddler we have had. He says hello to everyone on the weekly food shop and has even scored himself a free bag of chips each time he visits the milk shop because he has won the heart of the shop assistant there! As a family, we are looking forward to enjoying some annual leave next month. Life is busy and we value these times. We shall be loading up our combi and driving to Barberton (some 18 hours' drive away) to stay with Alun's cousins. Having never taken the children out of the Western Cape, we are excited to be able to show them new parts of the country and the amazing wildlife that South Africa is home to. Alun's parents are meeting us there and returning to Cape Town with us which is very special.

We value your prayers enormously. Here are a few pointers to lead you in prayer....

Upcoming Events:

4th June	Arise Adoption Family Forum Workshop
8th June	Cutting Edge Youth Rally
9th June	Women's Convention
2-6th July	Arise Holiday Club
16th-18th August	Crossword Kids' Camp

Matters for prayer:

- Gospel ministry at St. Thomas with Gary and Velma away
- Little M and T, and others like them, that God would continue to protect them as they grow up, and that he might save them
- Monthly donors for Arise
- Safe time of annual leave for our family (17th June-6th July)

With much love to all of you,
Alun, Debbie, Likhona (13), Ilana (10), Malachi (6) and Timothy (2)

Details for Giving to Arise:

Tax efficient giving can be done through:
Stewardship <https://www.give.net/Arise> (UK)
Givengain SA <https://www.givengain.com/c/arise/> (SA)
(Arise's website is currently down, so for more information please email debbierburt@gmail.com)

**If you want some recommendations of good missionary stories, why not get started with George Muller, Adoniram Judson, Hudson Taylor or Amy Carmichael? Harriet Tubman and Wilberforce (whilst not missionaries in the traditional sense, of course) are also remarkable biographies we have enjoyed this term.*

Photos: Debbie and the Children enjoying a day out for Ilana's birthday; Ilana singing in her school choir; one of Arise's groups with girls in a local high school.



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