

Prologue

Where to start since I've already waited two days to begin my diary. So, I'll back track and begin with our flight to Johannesburg (Joburg).

Thur Oct 20 & Fri Oct 21

The plane ride over was LONG and uneventful. The usual watching mindless movies reading, stretching, trying to catch a few winks and visiting with my fellow task force team members. They being: Larry & Barb Moir from the Cedar Grove Church, Denise Chandler from Second Oxford Church and Aaron Guman from 1st West Chester Church, and Sarah Carter from the Oxford Church.



We arrive in Joburg at 8:00 am local time and after working our way through customs and baggage claim, we find our way out to find my friend Maria Dores Cruz's smiling face to greet us. After a quick cell phone call to Sandra Duncan, one of our hosts along with her husband Graham, we load our bags in Maria's little pick up truck and the rest of the gang load in Sandra's van and we're off for Pretoria. I ride with Dores as one of Graham's students Zwaee is along leaving room for just five of our group in the van.

After a brief rest we have a late lunch with the General Secretary of the Uniting Presbyterian Church of Southern Africa (UPCSA) headquarter in Joburg. Despite our very tired brains, we have a wonderful, wide ranging discussion ranging from our partnership, challenges facing the country at large and the UPCSA specifically. Included in the discussion is the problems of inequality leading to crime, Aids, women in South Africa etc, etc, etc.

Aaron and I are quests of the Duncans in their home, while the others, Larry, Barb, Denise and Sarah are staying in the Student Housing of Graham's students (which is the guest house we stayed in 2005 recently purchased by the church). Aaron and I enjoy a vegetarian meal with the Duncans, their niece and grand niece who are in for a visit from the UK. We have a largely political discussion regarding British, South African and American politics. We go to bed very early, as our day starts at 4 a.m. tomorrow, as we are off to Pilanesburg Game Reserve with the Duncan's daughter's new husband Richard.



Sat Oct 22

We are up and on our way at exactly 4:30 am, as Richard arrives with his 3 year old daughter still sleeping in the front seat of the car. Seems she decided to come along yesterday, but in a very sleepy state and seeing a lot of strange faces, changes her mind. Richard quickly drives her home to mummy and returns for us. We have a great day exploring Pilanesburg and sharing thoughts about the country, our families, and the Amish. In between conversations we see many animals, giraffes, antelopes, hippos, zebras, wildebeests, and a cheetah (which we are told is very rare).

On the way home we stop at the Pick A Pancake craft village for some quick bartering. I say quick as we only had a half hour as we must be at a charity luncheon for Women and children who are homeless, battered or suffering from the affects of HIV/Aids. It's a wonderful affair in a downtown Pretoria Restaurant. Around 60 folks attend and much money is raised for the cause.

We return to our various home bases for some rest. Aaron and I enjoy some tea and sweets with the Duncans around the pool and await everyone's arrival for the Braai (Bar B Que) to be held at their house in the evening. The Brai is wonderful with Graham's students and us in attendance.



Sun Oct 23.

Its church day and we attend the valedictory service honoring six of Grahams & Prof. Masanga's at Pretoria Theological Seminary (included 3 men & 3 women one white & five blacks). It's a great testament to the new SA. It's a three and three quarter long service and is outstanding. There is much singing, a wonderful sermon by Rev Masanga, a communion led by Rev. Duncan and a foot washing of the six graduating seniors by their professor, Rev. Masanga. I should mention that the service was held in the Evangelical Presbyterian Church in the Attridgeville Township.

