

In the tracks of a missionary – Chapter 30

On The Road to Malelane (not Emmaus).

Towards the end of last year, we had a call from a young man, Nicholus, who was a teacher at a mission where Tom taught the teachers and staff at an orphanage school, during 2015-2019. It was a mission called Schulzendal. Circumstances change, but God's Plan marches on. Years later (2023), Nicholus asked Tom to teach pastors in his area. A network of sprawling villages: Schoemansdal, Tonga, Driekoppies, and even the kingdom of Swaziland. The closest town with any infrastructure, is Malelane. This is at least an hour & half away. So, Tom and I went on a *recon* to Malelane.

Of the 3 venues of choice, the one we thought ideal, the door slammed shut. Obviously not what the Father wanted. The least of our choices, was going to be the best of our Father's (*isn't that usually the case?*) The lodge is called, Pestana Kruger Lodge. ***What a story....***

Note: Our previous pastor, before Bobby Thieme, was his father, R. B. Thieme Jr. We learned from him that, "We don't choose the battlefield, God does that for you. But you can plant the colors where the colors never flew."

*Unlike some missionaries, we don't plant churches. We plant the colours which is the Word of God in the souls of Pastors and other Christian leaders. We search out **neutral** venues where pastors of all churches are welcome to come and learn.*

Hence, our reconnaissance to Malelane.

After notifying Pestana that we were considering their venue, there was silence. Was it taboo, African 'sangomas' (witchcraft), or cosmic interference? However, Tom nailed it when he reckoned that the area must have much positive volition to doctrine, and satan was attempting to *scupper* it all. But as we know so well, "*Greater is He that is in you....*" (1 John 4:4).

The story behind the silence, is quite extraordinary; but the person in that story is even more so. Her name is Vuyo. She is the Director of Sales at Pestana. The silence following our request was this: The GM up and walked out. Days prior they had hired a new F&B Director. Then lightning hit and wiped out the entire hotel, including kitchen, electrical appliances, telephones, cell phone towers, etc. Vuyo being the most senior manager, everything fell into her lap. That night she drove home exhausted to find her home was flooded out! *And she had a broken arm in the mix. Biblical Job-esque occurrences?*

In spite of it all, she called me, apologised and assured me she would confirm everything in writing, which she did the very next day. We were amazed. We then met with Vuyo the following week, who had proficiently organised the meeting with her staff. Being in the business for years, we knew what it took to pull off all she had done. We asked her where she had received her training. Her answer: *Never had acquired any formal training!* Rather, it was from her mother, who not only gave her children the true gospel, but taught discipline and organisational skills to prioritise their duties - all household duties and homework were to be completed prior to going out to play, carried her through many trying times. She continued to grow in her spiritual life and is now a senior member of a major hotel group.

We met with her on Monday, 22nd January, and were treated with sheer professionalism. Her subsequent response to my note of appreciation and confirmation of the venue and required items, is replicated below. Totally unsure as to numbers of attendance, we booked the smaller conference room that could accommodate 30 attendees. The following day, the numbers were at 28, and rising. The principle we have been taught: We simply prepare (as Tom most certainly does), and God brings the hearers.

Our first class at Malelane will be on 10th February, from 09:30 to 14:00

Here is Vuyo's note to me:

Good Evening Cheryl

I trust you and Tom are well.

Thank you for the special treat of seeing you Yesterday 😊.

I apologise for the late message.

I had a full day workshop and got back late home.

This is amazing news! (Vuyo refers to the numbers). Glory and honour be to God. 🙌🙌🙌🙌.

Looks like you have got your work cut out for you.

God is faithful to do the rest. 🙌🙌

I agree with Tom 100%

The world yearns to learn about God, this confirms that we were created to honour and praise the Lord.

The greatest news is that once one is in Christ, we are made new. So learning and searching the scriptures becomes a delightful experience and the wisdom the Holy Spirit imparts is beyond measure.

I will be in the office for few hours in the morning before heading out and will diarise the meetings.

🌸❤️ **Vuyo**



Pilkington & Rose were invited along.
Both are Swazis and both speak siSwati.
They are an integral part of our team.

Needless to say, we do not even need to *ask* for prayer for both Vuyo and the pastors, as our faithful prayer-warriors have already done so, on target. Thank you!!

Tom & Cheryl