

Newsletter Geanne in Africa

Hi everyone!

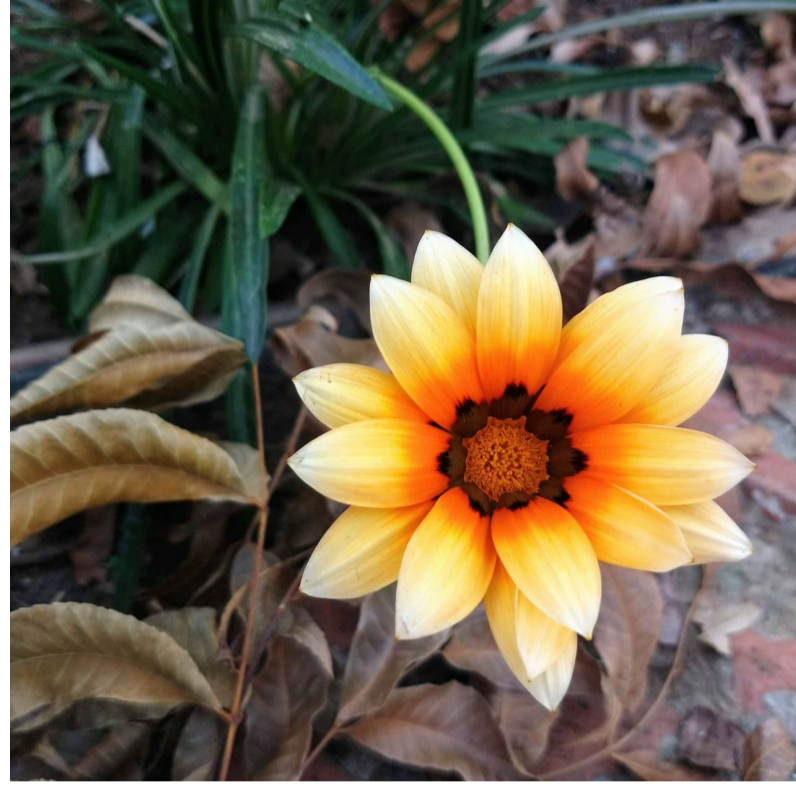
Jesus spoke to the people once more and said, "I am the light of the world. If you follow me, you won't have to walk in darkness, because you will have the light that leads to life."
John 8:12

It's time for another update from Melusi! Sometimes Melusi is covered in darkness. Literally in darkness. We are getting used to that here in South Africa. We call it loadshedding. Because of big problems in the country that provides our electricity, there is not enough for the whole country. That means that they do switch off our electricity several hours a day. If that happens you are sitting in darkness, you can't cook food, you don't have wifi and can't switch on the washing machine. That is all annoying, but obviously this is disastrous for South Africa's economy. Especially when it is like six or eight hours a day which sometimes happened. But this is literal darkness. However if we look around us we can see so much spiritual darkness. There is corruption and injustice everywhere. So much violence and people suffering. It can make you feel discouraged. But we do believe that Jesus is shining His light in the darkness and that He has overcome. He is our hope.



Update

Since I wrote the last newsletter a lot has happened in Melusi. In the beginning of June the German family who was part of our team for eleven years, left, to go back to Germany. It was a very emotional goodbye and we all needed (and still need) time to process. We do miss them. Even though I also find it special to see how everything carries on in Melusi. Our God is so faithful and He cares for us. For the kitchen we did find another lady who is helping us: mama Dlomo. Together with mama Blose she makes a good team. They work hard and bring so much joy. They love to sing and talk while they are cutting veggies and washing the dishes. It is a true blessing, especially now the team is so small. All our shorttermers left over the last months and we won't get many new shorttermers until the end of the year. Till next year we will have a small team. That doesn't matter, but it does mean that we will have a busy time lying ahead of us.



Residents

Next to the fact that we are a small team, there is another reason we are busy at the moment. We are having around 25 destitute and homeless men with us at the moment. The number is changing often because they come and go. Still we do see an increase over the last months. They all have a story to tell and they all need care. It is quite a job to make sure they are joining the work program during the day. They are not used to work anymore and it is hard for them to learn it again. They are so broken. Many things happened to them and because of their addiction they ruined their lives. Most have no contact to their families or just very little, some were in jail before, others have severe psychological problems. We do have some with us at the moment who are terrified at night because they do see the spirits coming after them. Others are using drugs and alcohol again and we have to dismiss them. It is heartbreaking to hear their stories and to see how little hope they do have. They live in such darkness. Still we do believe that Jesus sees them and that their time in Melusi is a chance to see His light. Do you pray for them too?



Caught by the spirits

When we talk about darkness, it makes me think of two people I met over the last months. One of them, an old lady, was lying on her bed when we entered her small house. Three years ago she had a stroke and you could see that she was struggling to speak. We did visit her before and that day we just wanted to find out how she is doing. Her name is gogo (that is granny) Elsie. I knew she was a sangoma, a traditional healer. You can see that by the beads she is wearing. That afternoon, when we entered the bedroom, I did see something I didn't notice before: a skin of a dead animal, beads and a bowl with burned incense. Obviously an altar for the ancestors. It made me realize again the reality in which people do live and how they hold onto that and remain in darkness. Gogo Elsie knows about Jesus, we have spoken about it several times, but she chooses to remain in darkness. It's so sad to see. Next to gogo Elsie, I also met a young girl. She is one of our teenagers who come to Melusi regularly. Her granny is also a traditional healer. The tragic part of her story is that her granny puts pressure on her to become a traditional healer too. She did talk about it when she came to us. This girl doesn't want to become a traditional healer, but at the same time is plagued by the spirits. They made her sick and reveal themselves to her in dreams. She is so scared of them. We do pray that she will be brave enough to stand and not to do what the spirits tell her to do. It is a real struggle. Do you pray with us for her?



Mama Maria and the owl

It is so good to know that not everyone is living in darkness. Last month mama Maria (one of our church members) told me a story that made me smile. Her husband baba Eric and herself live in an area where there is so much darkness. It is one of the poorest areas we visit and there are huge problems: many are addicted to alcohol and drugs and have no job. Faithfully mama Maria and baba Eric take care of the children in their neighbourhood. They cook for them and run a crèche to look after the little ones during the day. But over the last months it became more and more difficult for them. The neighbours are coming daily to demand food. When mama Maria told them it is for the children they do get upset with her. During one of the nights mama Maria heard an owl on her roof. In the Zulu culture owls are often used for witchcraft and to connect to the spirits. It is common to use that against someone you don't like or are jealous of. It could be that one of the neighbours sent the owl to her. Mama Maria wasn't scared of the owl though. She told me that she sat up straight in bed, lifted her hands and started to praise God. At that moment the owl flew away. For me it was such an example of simple faith. A faith that trusts God to answer our prayers.

That faith gives us courage for the months that lay ahead. God is faithful. The South African winters are very sunny and the sunrises each morning are stunning. Every morning for me is a reminder of God's faithfulness. He cares for us and sees us. He sees everyone who comes to us and their heartbreaking stories. We can trust Him and entrust these people in His care.



New website

There is one last thing I would like you to know: Melusi did get a complete new website. It tells the story of who we are, what we do and how God is working here in Dundee. If you would like to have a look, please check: www.melusi.com

Thank you so much for your support and prayers! They are truly appreciated.

Warm greetings all the way from South Africa, Geanne



Would you like to support Geanne's work financially with a donation? That's possible!

Bankaccountnumber NL39RABO0305509195

In the name of Zendingcommissie Hervormde Gemeente Barneveld

Under mention Melusi - Geanne van Maanen



Geanne serves with Serving in Mission, an international mission organisation. On their website www.sim.org you'll find more information about who SIM is.

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