



# Morning Star Children's Centre

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Our Dear Friends,



My 2019 UK Fundraising Trip is now behind me for another year. After months of organising and planning, all of a sudden it's over and I'm back behind my desk in South Africa, endeavouring to adjust to my 'other life' once again. The sun here goes down too soon each afternoon and rises too late in the mornings; I forget to do things and forget where I put things; I'm just generally totally disorientated for the first couple of weeks back at home each year.

My first week back at Morning Star coincided with the state dentist visiting our Welkom premises in his mobile clinic to check all our children's teeth, and do extractions and fillings where necessary. Our children's excitement at the new experience soon turned to tears as they underwent the varying treatments and the accompanying fright and pain. What a wonderful service, though - the dentist coming to us and not the other way around, which is normally the case.

My time in England (and 24 hours over the border in Wales) was hugely successful. Glenys Barham drove me around, once again,



(maybe for the last time?) and, in total, over 1,700 miles were safely covered. We travelled as far north as Harrogate in Yorkshire, to Sidmouth, Devon, in the south, to Chatham, Kent, in the east and west to Maescywmmer in Wales and our Gracious God granted us travelling mercies all the way. I always maintain that I've seen more of beautiful England than most people who have lived there all their lives.

All-in-all, 19 formal presentations were given at different churches and venues. Peter Barham, Glenys' husband, put my PowerPoint Presentation together once again and the images and photos used vividly portrayed our Morning Star ministry back in Welkom, South Africa. What a wonderful support both Glenys and Peter have been to Morning Star and me, personally, over the years.

#### PRAYER REQUESTS:

Praise God for:

- A successful UK trip, journeying mercies and that Joan's health remained good.
- His hand upon Morning Star in Joan's absence and that our children are relatively healthy at the moment.

Pray for:

- Wisdom as to how best to help our teenagers develop skills so as to flourish in adulthood.
- That our children and young adults will put their trust in the Lord Jesus Christ.
- Godly wisdom for the Morning Star Board in their succession planning endeavours and for the Annual General Meeting and Board Meeting coming up mid-July.
- The right help sourced to assist us become registered as a UK Charity.
- That Morning Star's income will pick up so that we can cover our monthly shortfall.
- That our supporters will prayerfully consider increasing their monthly giving and leaving Morning Star a legacy in their wills.

I'm no longer able to visit all our supporting churches every year although I do try to get to most every alternate year. What I endeavoured to convey at each meeting this trip was God's faithfulness over the 19 years of Morning Star's existence. He has led and guided us through the good and lean times and sustained and blessed us beyond our wildest dreams. That we've grown to accommodate 150 little children each weekday, and support over 500 school-going children at the same time, is truly amazing. And, what we do here 'on the ground' would be impossible without your ongoing, faithful support. Thank you, all of you, from the bottom of my heart.

Below are some of the facts shared with our UK audiences this past trip:

- *Morning Star opened in January 2000 with 8 children and 4 staff members. 19 years later (2019) we care for 150 children on a daily basis, support a further 500+ school-going children and employ 42 staff members in total.*
- *303 children from our register have died from January 2000 – December 2018. We've had no deaths, thus far, in 2019. This can be attributed to the fact that most of our children living with HIV/AIDS today are on anti-retroviral drugs (ARVs) and enjoying improved health and that those born to mothers infected with the AIDS virus were given ARVs in utero and then again when they were born. 98.5% of children born to mothers suffering from HIV/AIDS in South Africa today come into the world free of the disease themselves.*
- ***South Africa still has the highest incidence of HIV/AIDS in the world with 18.8% of our population infected with the disease.***
- *45% of the HIV positive children on our register are now over 14 years of age. Up to half of these are unable to achieve academically and some are dropping out of school even before proceeding to secondary school. Without intervention, these young adults will never be able to learn a skill and flourish independently in adulthood. This is because the AIDS virus affected their brain development in early childhood, resulting in them having limited attention spans and poor memory retention.*  
***This is a problem we never foresaw when Morning Star began nineteen years ago.***
- *At least 50% of the adult population in and around Welkom is unemployed and many of our Morning Star children/families live in tin shacks and survive on what they can scavenge from the municipal dumpsite and the odd part-time job secured. Morning Star presently gives out 80+ basic food parcels per month but only to families where the income is less than 50pds per household.*
- *Morning Star requires about 25, 000pds (R450, 000.00) income per month to carry out its different functions. Over 90% of this comes from our supporters in the UK.*  
*Unfortunately, we are no longer getting in sufficient income to cover our operational expenses and have noted an ongoing shortfall of about 1, 400.00pds (R25, 000.00) per month over the past year. This is quite concerning and especially in the light of being directed by the Department of Labour in South Africa to pay our staff members the now legalized, minimal wage.*
- *Morning Star relies heavily on its Child Sponsorship Programme to meet its monthly expenditure. In the past we have suggested that supporters contribute an amount of 25pds per month towards this programme. We are, unfortunately, now finding this too little and are asking old and new sponsors to prayerfully consider increasing their monthly standing orders to 35pds per month. This will go a long way in recovering our monthly shortfall. If, however, you are not in a position to assist in this way, please continue giving what you can afford.*
- ***Child Sponsors were reminded that their monthly giving to a specific child does not only contribute towards that particular child's needs, but also assists children without sponsorship and helps with Morning Star's running expenses and the paying of staff salaries.***
- *Morning Star is seeking to become registered as a UK Charity as soon as possible and welcomes any advice and input any of you can give. Ideally, we would like this to be functional before my UK trip in 2020, God willing. The Morning Star Board is well aware that my annual UK trips are largely reliant on my health and mobility going forward and that an alternate way of fundraising for Morning Star has to be sought urgently. Being registered with the UK Charity Commission will open doors to us that have, thus far, been beyond our scope.*  
*Our Board engaged the part-time services of a professional fundraiser from Johannesburg 8 months ago, in the hope of her being able to secure funding for Morning Star from within South Africa as well, in due course.*
- *Our long-term dream remains "To see increasing numbers of our teenagers turning to Christ, embracing Christian morality, reaching their dreams and sharing their faith and values with their own families one day". A few of our teenagers and young adults have professed faith in Christ over the latter years – but only a handful, in the big scheme of things. It could be disheartening – after all the months and years we've been discipling them – but, we take heart that we are called to be faithful, not successful, and trust the Holy Spirit to apply the truths of God's Word to our children's hearts.*

A big thank you, to all of you, who contributed to making my 2019 UK trip so memorable. Thank you for your friendship, encouragement, financial support and fund-raising endeavours. Every gesture of love is deeply appreciated. May the Great God whom we serve together ever use you for His honour and glory.

Love in Christ,  
Joan.

