

THE SCHLEHLEINS

Missionaries to the Tsongas of South Africa



MISSIONS NUMEROLOGY

Testimonies of Grace Given Through Numbers

Last week we enjoyed a joint service in Elim where we gathered to worship our new lives in Christ. Here are some numbers that give insight into the joy of that celebration:

0 - number of people healed, slain in the spirit, and/or enriched with prosperity — all prominent features in many African churches. Instead the service was full of Christ, singing and Scripture.

3 - number of songs sung that have been translated into Tsonga by the missionary wives. [Here's one example.](#)

4 - number of times Jomo Kubayi thanked God in his testimony for his stroke some years back. He may have limped to the platform, but his words were powerful as he related how God used that trial to lead him to Christ.

5 - number of Solas of the Reformation our churches love and follow. Banners are prominently hung at Elim Church promoting Sola Scripture, Sola Gratia, Solus Christus, Sola Fide and Soli Des Gloria.

6 - the number of villages that gathered. There was Tiyani, Nwamatatani, Mbhokota, Elim, Louis Trichardt, and Valdezia. All of these villages represented new church plants or preaching points that have sprouted up through the evangelistic endeavors of Seth and I, as well as the Tsonga leadership of the the established churches.

10 - the number of ways the publican repented. These were taken from just one verse in Luke 18:13, the preacher's text at the service.

11 - the number of those baptized. Some were mothers. Some were older men. Two were missionary kids (Audrey our daughter and Colin, Seth's son, both 13).

14 - number of young men standing in the back because there were not enough chairs. Yes, this was good because it shows the sanctuary was full. But it was even better that there were no *women* standing in back. The men showed their Christian worldview by giving the best seats to ladies.

25 - the number of verses the Tiyani believers quoted before their choir number. They took months to memorize Tsonga verses that started with letters A-Z (there was no verse for the letter 'Q').

60 - The minutes it took for all the 11 baptismal candidates to give their testimonies. These statements of faith contained lots of Christ, lots of Scripture, lots of grace, and lots of humility.

62 - the age of Thomas Shisana, one of those baptized from Mbhokota. He has blossomed as a Christian and evangelist in the past two years.

2500 - the number of liters of water it took to fill the baptismal, hauled laboriously by the members of Elim Baptist.

The New Testament doesn't emphasize numbers but it does reference them. The early church "increased in numbers daily." We pray this would be true of our mission work here.

For Jesus' sake,
Paul & Melinda,
Audrey, Nate, Law, Owen, Juju, Clara, Luke, Katie