



THE SCHLEHLEINS

Missionaries to the Tsongas of South Africa



A SHOT IN THE ARM

3 biggest encouragements from the first half of furlough

Every four years our family returns to the US for four months on furlough. We're not running to the tall grass to escape hard times. We're imitating Paul. He returned to Antioch after his first missionary journey, reporting what God had done through their ministry (Ac 14:26-28).

We're over half way through our trip. This week, a friend asked what the three biggest encouragements have been thus far. I'll answer that question in three alliterated points. I'm a preacher and can't help myself.

1. Christian Fellowship

The wheels of our airplane had barely landed in Wisconsin at the end of May before we were eating a meal with other Christians.

Ever since, Lindy and I have been filling our calendars with dozens of meetings with God's people. Each home blooms with kids giggling, great food, tall tales and the cherry on top of Family Worship. Most places give us at least one quote or observation to meditate upon.

Yes, St. Paul pioneered mission work as a single man. But I read somewhere that 100 names are connected with him in Acts and 38 were coworkers. Paul loved people.

Seeing family for the first time in four years highlights every furlough home. Melinda gets to see her family for five days every four years. She never complains. Our network of family and friends continues to grow bigger by the day, just as Jesus promised (Mk. 10:30).

2. Children flourishing.

All of our kids have been born in South Africa, so there are parts of culture Americana in which there is *no comprende*. But overall, they've thrived. They seem joyful

and energetic at each place we go, never mopey to see the next church or appointment. Not *have to*; *get to*.

What are some of the things they've enjoyed? They love being in large, spiritually vibrant congregations, full of bustling families, white hair, marked-up Bibles and funny accents (some things they rarely see in our village).

They love anywhere there's a basketball court, playing their instruments in church, long van rides listening to G.A. Henty, heaping mounds of pizza and interacting with kids their age that want to talk about substantive ideas.

Even while traveling, we try to cram in some homeschool —phonics for the littles and Logic for the bigs. I even gave a challenge (and a prize) for any kid that could memorize the Sermon on the Mount (Matt. 5-7; 111 verses). Lawson our 11 yo did it first...in two weeks.

We've had some laughs at some 'Merican idiosyncrasies. What's with the new pickle ball craze—tennis courts for midgets dotting the landscape? Why the obsession with paper towel? Yes, we could eat Chick-fil-A daily, but due to Bidenomics, we'll have to take out a loan first.

3. Church Strengthening

I've preached at least twice every Sunday (and often in between) but would speak daily if I could. Every place is unique. Some use hymnals, others screens. Some use the ESV, others KJV or NASB. Some are informal, others wear ties & dresses. All pray Jesus' fame would spread.

BONUS

A huge blessing is the work back with the Tsongas. Our dear friends, the Meyers, continue to labor and cover some of our ministries. Reg Ntuli and the Katungas excel in every way at the church and school. Pray for them.

Yours and His,

Paul & Lindy

Audrey, Nate, Law, Owen, Juju, Clara, Luke & Katie