

Paul Williams in South Africa

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(Note from Joel: I was supposed to send the first one yesterday and the note about Thembinkosi today. I just never got to sending this yesterday, so I am combining them together.)

Dear brethren and friends, It has been too long since I have written a report of our work in South Africa. I apologise. And I am now beginning a series of short reports which, I hope, will bring you up-to-date on our activities in South Africa. Your continued prayers, letters and support mean more to me than I can express. Thank you very, very much.
Paul Williams

REPORT –May 24, 2023, Eshowe, South Africa

When my foster son, Zipho, married Nicole, he inherited her 12-yr-old son Jaydon. After they married, he went to the Home Affairs Department and registered Jaydon as his own son, so Jaydon became my foster grandson. Jaydon has been attending Joel's after-school classes at the church building each Friday afternoon. He began asking Zipho about baptism, and two Friday afternoons ago he was baptised. I was at home when a group of people came to the house. They had come for Jaydon's baptism, which took place in the baptistry in our yard. It was pitch dark, but I could see what was going on as the lights of cellphones were shining on the activity. And I wasn't quite prepared for the elation I felt at the time. How wonderful was that event. My grandson now is a Christian. On Sunday morning I told the brethren that I was walking on air because my grandson had been baptised. That was the first time Jaydon had heard me call him "grandson", and I could see he was greatly affected. He is the one who walks me from the car on Sunday mornings across the rough lawn in front of the church building. He then sits with me on the front row to take care of my every need. He shows his love in many ways, and I certainly love him. Rejoice with me, brethren.

THEMBINKOSI APLENI DEAD

I am interrupting my reports with this very sad news which I received yesterday. Thembinkosi Apleni has been preaching the gospel in the rural area of King Williamstown for a number of years. I have preached meetings at this house and taught classes to some of the young men. Thembinkosi and his wife and son slept at our

house when my wife was still living. We were friends. But several days ago his wife phoned Bro. Robin Bauer in Cape Town to tell him that Thembinkosi's body had been found that morning at the house. Mzwandile Gazu learned about it from the news. Thembinkosi fairly recently had gone into politics. He became an office-holder in the radical Economic Freedom Fighters party, and had even been given a seat in parliament. And now he is dead—possibly at his own hands. What a tragic story which is depressing us all. I don't know what can be done to help the brethren he left behind. Please pray for his wife, son and the church.

May 30, 2023

It was probably a mistake to begin our short gospel meeting with Philip Williams on a Friday night. We had a light crowd. But from the time Philip Williams (son of our oldest son, Kenneth) began drawing to illustrate his sermon on "I Am The Vine", he had the undivided attention of the entire audience. And afterward, the small crowd crowded around the platform taking pictures of the illustration Philip had drawn. And Saturday night's attendance was much better, as was Sunday morning's. Philip brought two of his children, Eden and Levi, with him for this short trip to South Africa. He preached in several places and did us a lot of good. We thank the brethren who made his visit possible.