



Changing the destiny of children

2008 - The Year of Joy

25 January 2008

Dear friends and family,

It is exactly 15 years ago, on the 25<sup>th</sup> of January 1993 that my Private practice as Social Worker was registered with adoptions as specialty. Abba Adoptions started in a small office and the main focus was marriage counseling and mother care for pregnant unmarried women. During that first year, I completed 5 adoptions, cared for 35 women and counseled more than a hundred couples. I could then never have dreamt that that this small beginning would develop into two strong beautiful organizations, which are currently changing the lives of hundreds of children and families every year.

Thinking back today, I know it was only possible by the grace of God.

I would like to declare this year as the Year of Joy to celebrate the faithfulness of God who personally led, provided and protected this work all these years. The following word: **“Sing about a fruitful ministry: I, the Lord, watch over it; I water it continually, I guard it day and night so that no one may harm it” (Isaiah 27:2,3)** was given to me in September 1993 and I can testify today that we serve a God who is faithful to His Word. I have so much JOY in my heart thinking back and knowing I have experienced Jesus personally and have learnt to know what it meant to be led by God and to experience His presence.

During this Year of Joy we will also celebrated and honour all the people who have so faithfully served the vision and dream of making a difference to hurting mothers, children and families. I am planning a celebratory dinner for the 4<sup>th</sup> of September later this year and if you are interested you can already book your place with Tanya at [info@sacares.co.za](mailto:info@sacares.co.za)

Some personal family news is both happy and sad.

My son, Justin and his fiancée, Jolene, are getting married today and it is an extra special day as it is also my oldest daughter, Sylvi and Johan's fifth wedding anniversary.

On a much sadder note will I start to prepare to fly to the USA on the 30<sup>th</sup> of January for an unlimited time to care for my father who is critically ill with cancer. We still believe and trust God for a healing miracle and I hope to return with good news. Join me to keep on praying for him. I will hold onto Joy in my heart as it is written: The Joy of the Lord is my strength. (Neh 8:10)



Our scripture for the year is found in Matthew 25:23 “Well done, good and faithful servant! You have been faithful over a few things, I will make you ruler over many things. Enter into the **JOY** of your lord.

My prayer for this year for all our sections and new developments are found in Jer 33:9 “And this ministry (SA Cares, Abba Adoptions, Lesedi la Batho and Norsa) will be a centre of joy and praise and glory for all the countries on earth. They'll get reports on all the good God is doing for us. They'll be in awe of the blessings God is pouring on us.”

From the managers of the different sections I have received the following reports for this first month of 2008 – the Year of Joy!

From Marlize:

### **Lesedi and Khodisong Early Learning Centres**

2008 officially started for 100 little faces on the 9<sup>th</sup> of January this year. The Early Learning Centre's of both Khodisong and Lesedi were geared up and ready for a new year of fun and learning as the first learners arrived through the rain on this dreary Wednesday morning. The wet and muddy weather outside, however, had little effect on their excitement as they ran inside, open and eager for many new experiences. The teachers had their hands full after such a long holiday and began with basic routines to create order in the classroom. After about a week, the children were settled in again and formal lessons started. We are excited about the development of our centres thus far and believe that 2008 will be filled with new blessings, challenges and exponential growth in our standard of education.



From Marietjie:

### **NORSA – Western Cape**

At the NorSA office in the Cape, a lot of growth happened since we officially opened the NorSA office during September 2006. When I visit the two projects in Wellington and De Doorns, I am astonished to see what has happened within 1 year and 4 months. No human being is able to do such a development in such a short period. The only answer is God-made miracles.

Riekie mentioned the wonder of being led by God and that is exactly what we experience within NorSA. Our vision is to be faithful in what God expects from us and since we started, He blessed every development!

One of the biggest steps in faith I took, was the development of the foster home, Abba Khaya. The house is currently full with 6 children and it is the biggest blessing to experience the change this house brings to the lives of these 6 children. My dream for 2008 is to develop another foster home as it changes the lives of children in need.



NorSA was blessed with the donation of a Toyota Quantum bus on the 31 December 2007! We were in desperate need for transport for our children to the hospital. God placed Sakkie Liebenberg, the owner of Liebenbrans transport on my heart. After a short telephone discussion about our needs for a second hand vehicle, Sakkie said he is going to bless us with a new bus. On 31 December 2007 he phoned me to say I need to collect the bus. When I arrived at

his offices, the Quantum was waiting!

Experiencing all these miracles, our ministries can only be a center of joy. I know 2008 will be a year of joy as we are serving a loving, faithful God who enables us to provide for families and children and need!

From Marita:

### NEO BIRTH Pregnancy Care Centre

We had a slow start the first week after our return from our summer holidays. But then we started to get busy as many of the youngsters came to us for pregnancy tests and counseling - a direct result of the very same summer holidays!!! We have also already had a few clients coming to us for post-abortion counseling as they are hurting emotionally and need urgent help.



We have lost a few of our volunteer counselors because of various reasons. Some had to go back to the job market as they needed an income and others have moved out of Pretoria. This way we have lost our team leader for our Youth Program as the family moved to Agulhas! Even our Ugandan volunteer who had completed her counseling training had to go back to her country as her husband had finished his studies here in SA. Of course it is a sad loss for Neo Birth, but we pray that Kampala, Uganda and Agulhas, the southernmost point of SA, will soon have a pregnancy

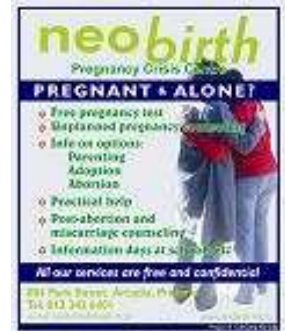
crisis centre of its own, run by two wonderful women!!

Our Memorial Garden, which was inaugurated in October last year, survived the summer holiday's intense heat and is growing beautifully. Apart from its use by our clients with a pregnancy loss, we are also using the Chapel regularly and it is lovely to have the extra space for our meetings, to give talks or have training sessions. Of course the chapel is available to all our staff and clients should they need it to spend private time with the Lord.



To be part of Neo Birth is to be able to witness one miracle upon the other. Here is one of them and is such a true miracle story and a testimony of God's goodness and His intervention:

*Susan\** went to an abortion clinic for help as she was frantic and in a desperate position. Her husband has passed away, and according to cultural custom was betrothed to his brother. In the meantime she had an intimate relationship with a man, whom she later discovered was married. She fell pregnant from this man but he was not prepared to take responsibility for her or the baby. The reason why she was so frantic to abort was because her marriage to the brother was due in four days time in another province. The abortion clinic examined her but refused to perform an abortion, as she was already nearly 28 weeks pregnant. The abortion clinic referred her to Neo Birth, but she went to a doctor instead. This doctor was prepared to prematurely induce labour but required that she had to go to the provincial hospital to deliver, knowing they will not resuscitate such a small baby. He further told her that should the baby survive, she could leave the baby behind and the hospital would see that the baby be adopted.



Whilst at the doctor, Susan felt uncomfortable and remembered us. At this point in time she was under the impression that Neo Birth was also an abortion clinic and perhaps could do a quicker procedure. She was actually very agitated when she found out that we do not perform abortions. Nevertheless she allowed us to counsel her and seeing her circumstances, we promoted the adoption option. She was not very impressed with this and after 90 minutes of intense counseling, left our premises and her departing words were that she would rather die than to be exposed to the wrath of her in-laws. After saying goodbye to her, the counselor and trainee-counselor who was present during the counseling session, seriously prayed for Susan to reconsider. They were asking for a miracle.

Three days later we received a telephone call from Susan, telling us she has decided not to abort but to proceed with the pregnancy and to eventually place the baby for adoption! The reason why she had changed her mind is that earlier that morning she has received the news that her uncle and aunt, who have raised her, has been in a serious car accident and were in hospital. Though they were not critically injured, they were not able to be part of the wedding ceremony and for this reason the wedding had to be postponed for a few months. She saw this incident as "a sign" to rather carry the baby to term and to release the baby for adoption once it has been born. She was referred to the adoption office and after a healthy little baby was born, the baby was placed in the arms of a loving forever family.

We praise the Lord for His intervention. It is such a privilege that we could be part of this miracle.

From Miriam:  
**ABBA NURSERY**

ABBA House entered 2008 with an **explosion of activity**. There was really no warm-up time! On the first day that the Adoption Office placed babies, we introduced three of ours to their adoptive parents. We have now introduced eight babies to their parents this year. While this is wonderful news, it means a lot of report writing and our volunteers have to say a lot of good-byes! Of course babies going out leaves space for babies coming in, so we have also welcomed three new babies, one just one-day old! In 2007, 64% of our babies were adopted directly from the Nursery, of the others, the majority were 'over-night' babies, whom we discharged from hospital and then one of the other shelters came to collect when they came through to Pretoria, many of these babies would also have been adopted. Some of the babies also returned to their birth-families once our social workers were sure that the situations were acceptable.



Our volunteer doctors have again worked very faithfully with the babies at ABBA, we have both a paediatrician, who declares our babies medically fit for adoption, and a GP who sees all our sick babies. Sadly for us though, our GP will be selling his practice and moving town, so will be leaving. This is rather a disaster for us as he comes once a week if we need him and has seen 61 babies during his visits in 2007! When there's five babies to see, it's a lot easier to have a doctor who will make a house call! **Please pray for a good doctor to replace him, and please approach anyone you know who maybe able to help in this way.**

**Our Annual Report for 2007 is complete, if you would like a copy, you are welcome to order one from us at a suggested donation of R40.** It's 40 pages, and has colour photos on almost every page. If you ever wonder what we do during the year, I trust that this report will give you a very good idea. It's been a very encouraging year, with good community involvement, and many babies introduced to their families.

From Katinka:

### **AFM ABBA ADOPTIONS**

AFM Abba Adoptions are excited about the year of 2008. During 2007 we faced many professional and personal set backs and are really excited to enter into a new year and especially one filled with Joy. We have seen tremendous growth in our adoption program during the last five years, and have now reached a point where we want to consolidate in specific areas, but also develop other areas. One of our biggest challenges during 2007 was our total dependence on the formal system and all the changes that has been introduced through them. Our authorities are now finalizing legislation and policies and some of these changes have already been introduced. This process requires that we constantly need to adjust our services without jeopardizing the standard and quality.

Our biggest focus for this year will be to further develop our black same race adoption. The process of creating awareness and educating our society goes hand in hand with this. We will again be undertaking marketing events and campaigns in rural areas. We are also excited about the opening of our new single mother's home. This project is brand new and we still need a lot of prayers and support. We are standing with our partner SA Cares for life in faith that this year will be a year of joy and that God will bless us in our joint efforts to make a positive and permanent difference in the lives of children and families in South Africa

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Stand with us in faith for 2008 and also make your decision to keep your joy in all circumstances!

Be blessed,  
**Riekie**