

parents have made a significant difference in South Africa. Their choice to devote themselves to the work of the Lord can never be measured.

Many of the churches have no full time preachers, but men within the church take turns teaching. The problems of witchcraft and cultural traditions, combined with low levels of education and language barriers, make spiritual growth very difficult in some areas.

One of the most complicated issues to sort through when teaching someone the gospel is that of marriage. In the African culture, the man is required to pay the father for his wife (*lobola*). For example, recently a young Christian man was required to pay 17 cows for his wife. It is more common today to pay the price value of 17 cows, as opposed to actual cows as in the past. However, it is rare that a young man has the amount of money needed to pay the entire *lobola* (roughly a year's worth of salary), so the father may accept only part of the *lobola* as a down payment and allow his daughter to move in with the young man as though they are married. This causes complications because any children born before the *lobola* is completely paid off, belong to the wife's family (their last name will be that of the mother's family). If the mother dies before the father has finished paying the *lobola*, then the children go to the wife's family rather than the father. If the man dies, then all the possessions are taken by the man's family and the woman is left with the children but without any belongings or a home. This cultural concept of marriage is often a deterrent to someone accepting the truth. It is not easy for them to just marry and fix their relationship with their 'wife' to be right in God's eyes when so much money is required and they have been living as a family for so many years. Although this is a complicated matter for many in Africa, I think that no matter what culture you are a part of, being a Christian is about trying to follow God and keeping His commandments. Therefore, we all have to be willing to give up anything that keeps us from being able to do that. Those things we have to give up may be different in each culture or each individual's life, but a decision and action is required on every person's part to truly follow God whole-heartedly.

You married Jeremy Harbig. How different is your life from your parents?

I met Jeremy on a Sunday when he came to visit the Antioch church, where I was attending. As he was a visitor, I made an effort to greet him, and the rest, as they say, is history! On our first date, Jeremy showed up in a Miata convertible to pick me up. He immediately offered to put the top up (he must have sensed the amount of time I spent fixing up my hair!), but I declined and so he offered me a hair tie to keep my hair from flying all about. These simple thoughtful acts were just the first of many to impress me. Jeremy has the ability to think ahead and be aware of even the little details and needs of others. Two months later, he called my father to ask his permission to marry me. Unfortunately, he miscalculated the time change and called my dad right as he was about to get up and preach (the church met in the home of my parents). That conversation was awkward at best, but it all worked out and we are about to celebrate 11 years of marriage.

One of the most obvious differences in my life with Jeremy compared to that of my parents is that Jeremy's work can be left at the office. I do enjoy that part of my life with

him and the girls. God needs to be entwined with and of first priority in all areas of our lives, but it's a struggle to prioritize God, family, and work when your full time job is God's work. Having seen my parents juggle that, I'm glad not to carry that burden. However, my life with Jeremy is very similar to how I view my parents lives in many ways. Jeremy is someone who leads our family spiritually and understands the importance of making sure God is a part of our daily lives. He enjoys family time, he works hard, supports me in being a stay-at-home mom, and is very involved with the girls. He enjoys camping (as long as it involves an air-conditioned camper), the outdoors, and music. Overall, I feel blessed to have a partner like Jeremy. I know my parents make a good team and feel blessed to have each other to help them in their efforts to serve God these past 40 years. I pray that Jeremy and I are blessed to be a team for just as many years.

Would you like for your children to have your upbringing? Would you like to be a "missionary" wife?

I am conflicted over this. I love my life here and my three lovely girls. However, I do wish the girls could experience firsthand the poverty and needs of others less fortunate in the world. It is hard to raise them in a way where they do not have a sense of entitlement when they live in a country where they, their friends, and family have so much. I hope to one day take them over to see South Africa and to meet many of the brethren there so they can experience it in a small way. However, I also know the real difficulty of being a wife abroad and the heavy load of preaching God's word to the lost full time and caring for so many with fractured lives. It was never a dream of mine to be a preacher's wife. With my personality and experience as a child in South Africa, I wanted something different. Having said that, I do feel there are important ways to serve God and others here, in my family, the church family here, and in the Temple Terrace community. I hope to be a good example to my girls as I try my best to show them how to be a humble servant of God no matter where I live or what job I choose.

(Phyllis) I thank Melody for sharing her life experience which I find fascinating. Melody and Jeremy have three daughters: Indi (8), Amelia (6), and Elise (4). Jeremy is a Lead Applications Developer at JP Morgan & Chase. He is a deacon and works tirelessly in the Sound and Media Center at TT. Jeremy's parents, Neil and Julie have recently place membership at TT and live in Meadowood. We are so grateful to have this wonderful family as part of our church family and thank you, dear God, for their devotion to you. ∞

Phyllis Littell



Spiritual thoughts from women of the Temple Terrace Church of Christ



In loving memory of our sister, *Joella Pickup*.

Worthy Women's Words

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Out of Africa

By Melody Harbig as told to Phyllis Littell

Did you ever go on a family outing and face a belligerent elephant blocking the road? Did you ever have a grenade drill in elementary school? (You were told to shove your desk under the windows and then take cover.) Did you have an army escort to school and see the army guards surrounding your school for the remainder of the day? Have you ever sat through a sermon that was translated into multiple languages? In a Bible study, did the person answer "not exactly" to the question "Are you married?" There is one of our sisters at Temple Terrace who would answer yes to all of those questions - Melody Maydell Harbig.

Melody grew up in the Gauteng province of South Africa (yellow area on map). She is the daughter of Les and Linda Maydell. Her father was born and raised there.



He was an electronics technician who was converted by a colleague at work. As he learned more and more about true Christianity, he decided he wanted to prepare himself to be able to preach. Gene Tope who preached in Krugersdorp graciously invited him to live and study with him. During this time he learned about Florida College and determined to attend there. He went back home and worked lots of over time; then he sold everything he had including a sailboat that he had built in order to achieve this goal. While at FC he worked at a gas station and as a gardener and eventually got some preaching jobs. While there he met Melody's mother, Linda (she sat behind him in chapel), but she was uninterested in being more than just

friends. As she continued her studies in elementary education at USF, Les began preaching at a church in Lakeland. He soon asked Linda to come to Lakeland with him and teach the children's classes. She agreed and they spent Sundays together in Lakeland rather than drive back and forth for evening services. This led to their deepening friendship and eventual marriage. After much persuasion, Linda agreed to visit South Africa for a couple of months to be certain she could appreciate the move. She not only married him, but except for a few scattered visits, they have been in South Africa ever since.

Melody and her two sisters and brother were all born in South Africa. However, they also have American citizenship due to their mother being born in Missouri. They had many modern conveniences on their five-acre farm, located about forty-five minutes from the town of Pretoria. Everyday activities included going to school, completing homework, playing outside, and practicing music. Her mother thought it important that her children should study classical music so they were given lessons in violin, cello, and piano and were able to participate in the local youth orchestra. This afforded lifelong friends with mutual interests. Eventually she and her sister and two others formed a string quartet and performed at weddings and dinner parties during their high school years.

This provided a wonderful outlet for Melody. When she came to FC, while her background was incredibly different from her peers, she found the universal language of music offered her an opportunity to make many friends as she played the violin in the string orchestra, keyboard in band, and stand-up bass in the Jazz band. She still plays the violin in the Tampa Bay Symphony today.

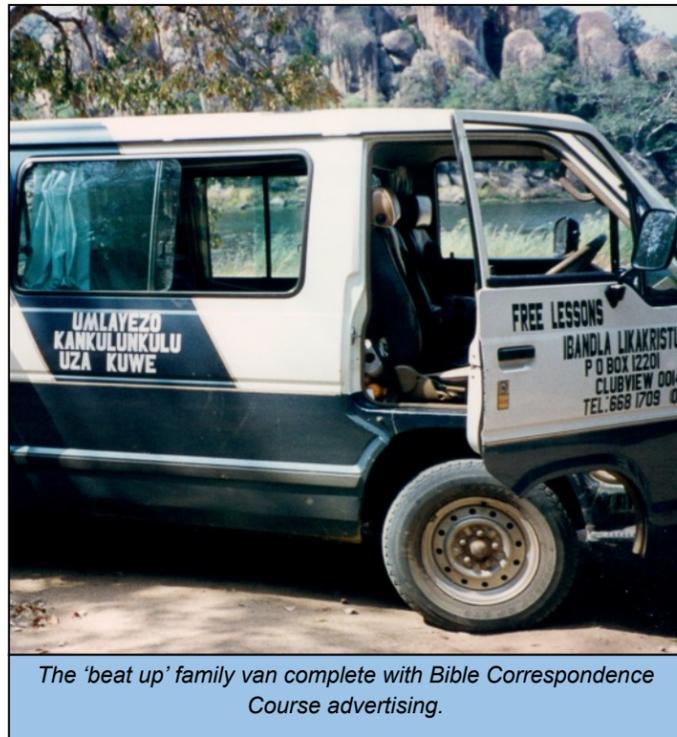


Melody (left) and her high school string quartet, the Serenading Strings.

Melody's childhood was vastly different than that of most. The growing-up years in Africa were the active years of Apartheid. Just as the U.S. saw race riots in these years, apartheid was the opening of equal rights for the black population. The white rule in Africa reflected many years of domination by various European countries. The mixture of cultures had reached uneasy coexistence. Schools and areas of the country were separated. Many blacks worked as maids or gardeners for white families. In many cases they were considered part of the family. If they were ill, the employers took them to the doctor. They would often pay for their children's school fees. Some were included in family vacations. However, for the most part they led separate lives. The blacks were given their own land and left to live and let live. Cultural differences were reflected in the laws. Blacks could have multiple wives, homes without the required safety inspections, and various animals. Whites could only have one wife and live in modern homes, etc. However, this forced separation involved unfair distribution of wealth. The whites were given the choice areas to live and better paying jobs. Nelson Mandela became the respected leader who headed the negotiations on the part of the blacks to put an end to apartheid and this unfair distribution of wealth. Of course, the negotiations were fraught with tension that resulted in riots, violence, and bombings. One of their church members, a young widow, was severely injured in a bomb blast outside her work building. She was walking to lunch on June 3, 1988 when it went off. It was the fifth bomb in 9 days. However, due to the hard work of President de Klerk and Mandela together, the violence calmed down significantly. Together, they won the Nobel peace prize in 1993 for their work in bringing peace to a country through the dismantling of apartheid.

(Melody speaks) Growing up with Apartheid, I went to an all-white public school. Even though public, my parents still had to pay fees for us to attend. Most of the students were speaking Afrikaans (this language was derived from the German-Dutch era when the country was ruled by these groups). However, there were a few of us English speaking students as well, although we all spoke both languages. There were about 110 students in the school. We learned the usual subjects: math, history, and then English and Afrikaans. However, math problems were solved by using the metric system, history was about Africa and Europe. English – well that was something else, especially when you have a teacher whose first language is Afrikaans trying to teach the complicated English language. My mother was not happy with the results and after many complaints and conferences, the principal suggested that my mother write the English curriculum for the school, and so she did. Bible was a subject taught daily in school and we had chapel on Monday, Wednesday, and Friday. My Father was often the speaker on Fridays and we loved those mornings because we didn't have to get up early to ride the bus to school. During the years of unrest, the army escorted our school bus and remained stationed around our school. We were a small school in the mountains and so were seen as very vulnerable to an attack. We had grenade and bomb drills regularly at school, but during about a two-year period, there were no instances of trouble.

You came back to the states a total of four times in your childhood. What was that like?



The 'beat up' family van complete with Bible Correspondence Course advertising.

It was always exciting to come to America. Most of the excitement was due to the fact that we would be seeing our grandmother. She, of course, would spoil us and spending time with her was special to us. Although South Africa enjoys many of the same modern conveniences that America has, there were some differences. Crime in South Africa was high; cars and personal property would frequently be stolen. In my childhood, we had three of our cars stolen so we had many extra locks and safety measures in place to try to keep our car from being stolen while at home, at a store, or at music lessons. My Father bought the worst beat up vans he could find to discourage having them stolen. Fortunately, he was a good mechanic and could keep them running, but we never knew when they might break down. However, in America, we would see my grandmother go out in the cold, turn her car on and leave it running (with the keys in the ignition!!) to



Melody and her translator teach Bible class.

warm up, while she came back inside the house to finish gathering her things. We would drive past houses with bikes left on the lawn, lawn equipment outside the garage, etc. and none of it got stolen.



This was amazing to us. We were also fortunate to visit many churches throughout the country as my dad reported on the work he was doing in South Africa. It was very encouraging to attend churches that to us were very large and strong. Being able to attend a Bible class that had many children our age was a special treat to us. Also, meeting many of the people at the churches that helped support my parents in their efforts to teach God's word in South Africa was an encouraging and humbling experience.

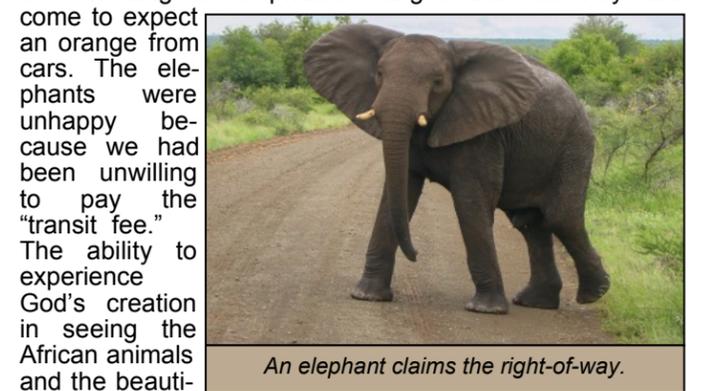
Tell me about the culture shock as you left South Africa and came to the United states and FC.

I was painfully shy and it didn't help that it was difficult to make small talk with everyone because I knew very little about popular movies, TV shows, American music, etc. I was often homesick, missing my family and friends and unable to call home often because it was so expensive. However, while struggling with those emotions, I also felt so fortunate to be halfway across the world attending FC. Not only was I privileged to get a good college education, but I was able to do so in an environment surrounded by many good and godly people. Many of the foreign students gravitated together because we were all facing these similar issues and could empathize with each other as we struggled to fit in. Fortunately, I also had my music and I had that in common with many at FC. I soon made good friends due to that common interest. I, like my mother, majored in elementary education. FC had just completed the four-year degree and I was one of the first Elementary Education graduates in 2001. After graduating, I taught in Hillsborough County for six years before having children.

What was it like being not only being a preacher's kid, but a preacher's kid in South Africa?

My father and mother worked very hard and often together as a team. When my father taught the men, my mother would teach the women and children. There were many opportunities for us children to be involved in the work as well. We would help make copies of the Bible Correspondence Lessons, fold songbooks and staple them together, and even teach some of the children's classes on occasion. When God and your full time work are so closely intertwined, it can be hard to sort out where family fits in. My parents always tried to make the family feel important even though they were so busy. Friday nights were family nights and once a month we went camping on a Friday night (where there were no telephones or emails to interrupt). We often went to national parks – my mom got to enjoy her bird watching hobby and we would have fun looking for animals. It was on one of these trips that we came face-to-face with a belligerent elephant. We were trying to return to the park entrance gate which was due to close soon and had to come to a stop due to some elephants blocking the road. My dad would try to creep up to encourage the elephant to move

from the road, but the elephant would flap its ears and start towards us so my dad would quickly reverse. This went on a few times, until my father finally went off road to get around the elephants. When we arrived at the gate, very late, the guard informed us that some tourists had been feeding the elephants oranges and that they had



An elephant claims the right-of-way.

come to expect an orange from cars. The elephants were unhappy because we had been unwilling to pay the "transit fee." The ability to experience God's creation in seeing the African animals and the beautiful African landscape is something I'll never forget. However, I am most grateful for the experience of growing up as a preacher's kid in South Africa. God blessed our family in many ways, and seeing the work that my parents did daily for the Lord and others, is an example that I'm fortunate to have seen and lived with.

What would you like the congregation to know about Christianity in South Africa?

Many people in South Africa are searching for the truth. People are anxious to study the Bible and many respond positively to an invitation to church or to a private Bible study. An ad in the paper for correspondence courses is met with enthusiastic answers. Handing out a card or tract will often result in an agreement to attend a Bible study. There is a place for many needed workers in South Africa. The work can be overwhelming for the few that are currently there. **Matthew 9:37** Then He (Jesus) said to



The church in Moboloka, South Africa

His disciples, "The harvest is plentiful, but the workers are few". This is so true. There is a huge need for preachers and others to come. The people need the basic truths of Hearing, Believing, Confession and Baptism. The believers there need encouragement and to be reminded that they are not forgotten. The rewards of converting one soul to Christ far outweigh the discomforts. I believe my