

# VOLMOED



BRINGING WHOLENESS  
TO BROKEN PEOPLE

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Dear Prayer Partners,

In this month's letter I felt led to tell you the story of the Volmoed Prayer Hut. So many people visit it while on Volmoed and we have a file of testimonies of how people are blessed and feel that Our Lord is more tangible there than anywhere else! During the Art @ Volmoed retreat in September one of the participants decided she needed to go out and take photos and she was led to the Prayer Hut and found herself sitting down and reading through one of Eddie Askew's books. She read the first chapter and then went on and on reading and shared that each page was meant for her! This has been the tale of many and we know it will continue to be so.

Way back in 1988 St. Mary's Oatlands in the UK donated 500 pounds towards the building of our first Prayer Hut. This was started in June 1989. A good spot was found up on a rocky koppie which today is in the middle of the bungalow area but in those days it was in the bush. We have photos in our history album of Bernhard and myself, Barry, Margie and Willie Hare, and John Freeth and his nephew Ben checking out the site and then putting in the first gum poles (cut down from here) to form a circle. We had had Brother Albert to stay and he had said that the Prayer Hut must be big enough for someone to sleep in it so we measured him lying down on our lounge floor and took the measurements for the circle! It was built out of local stone with 7 windows taking in the magnificent mountain and fynbos scenery. Bernhard was the "master" builder but had not had much experience with building a rondavel shape so a builder in the valley, Lambert, came to help, laughing at Bernhard's attempts! He doubled up on the width of the walls and soon it was up to roof height. Next went the roof timbers and then the thatch. We had to go and collect the thatch from a farm between Bredasdorp and Agulhas, which had been cut and bundled ready to transport back to Volmoed by bakkie. We found a thatcher called Stephen who lived locally and he did a great job putting on the roof. Almost a year later, in 1990 Clem Sergel came and led a dedication service on Ascension Day. I remember a long chain of people climbing up through the bush and up the hill to stand around the prayer hut as Clem did the service and Dick Marinus with his guitar led us in worship. I share Clem's prayer of dedication.



*Sovereign Lord Jesus Christ, we acknowledge You as our Alpha and Omega,  
the beginning and the end, and we rejoice in your presence ever knocking on the door of all our  
hearts.*

*Bless all who enter this **sacred place** of prayer – guide their thoughts and strengthen their faith that,  
as they offer their prayers here for the extension of your Kingdom in this land  
and in the lives of all who visit Volmoed,  
their prayers may break down all the forces of evil and open the way for your Holy Spirit to bring new  
life in those for who they pray.*

*We ask you Lord Jesus to bind their prayers to your constant intercession for us all on the throne of  
glory where you live and reign as Lord of Lords and King of Kings.*

We had a visit recently from Rob Wakeling, godson of Clement Sergel. His wife Mary and youngest son Matthew were with him and they had a couple of days enjoying the peace of Volmoed during their busy South African trip. They now live in Inverness, Scotland.

I have highlighted the words “**sacred place**” because this was the theme that Christa used during the Art@Volmoed retreat. She asked the question – “*What is a sacred space?*” and the answer – “*At its most basic, it is a place which invites the contemplation of divine mystery, and encourages an attitude of spiritual openness. A sacred space is not necessarily where answers are grasped or understood rather it is where questions are asked, conversations occur, dances are performed, songs are sung, silence is heard – all in the attempt to find answers.*” She explained that in Celtic Christianity sacred places were called “thin places”. A “thin place” is any place where the wall between this material world and the realm of the divine becomes so thin that we can experience a glimpse or taste of the glory, majesty, and love of God. Isn't that just beautiful and I believe we have many “thin” or sacred places on Volmoed. Come here, be present in that realm and in love with that love.

One of our recent guests would agree that Volmoed is a **sacred place**. She had been busy with a Clinical Pastoral Education programme with nine participants from around the world. She needed to ‘get away’ mainly from concrete, telephones, emails and such like. Her answer – **VOLMOED**. As she drove along the N2 she knew she was going in the ‘right’ direction but when she turned into Volmoed she ‘knew’ she was in the ‘right space’. The quality and the depth of relief, sense of safety, of being ‘at home again’, a sense of ‘dropping my shoulders’ and able to breathe more deeply – the relief was wonderful and she had only come to the office to collect her key and not yet arrived at her bungalow! In closing she shared of the rest, restoration and refreshment she found in her four days here and added that Volmoed seems to be a place to experience miracles. We all agree. Give grateful thanks for these testimonies.

In the introduction of the Volmoed Pilgrim Walk, Isobel and Carolyn used some of T.S. Eliot's words (The Four Quartets; Little Gidding)

*If you came this way,  
Taking any route, starting from anywhere,  
At any time or at any season,  
It would always be the same: you would have to put off  
Sense and notion. You are not here to verify,  
Instruct yourself, or inform curiosity  
Or carry report. You are here to kneel  
Where prayer has been valid. And prayer is more  
Than an order of words, the conscious occupation  
Of the praying mind, or the sound of the voice praying.*

May you too wherever you live and move, be aware of the “sacred”, that mystery of God within and around us and like many who visit Volmoed, find the comfort and strength to continue to walk in this world.

A traveller of a different sort – our regular visitor is back as Spring is here and so is the Piet-my-vrou. He is once again singing happily and although he arrived later than usual, he has not lost his voice!

#### **VOLMOED OCTOBER HAPPENINGS:**

30<sup>th</sup> – 2<sup>nd</sup> DRC Brackenfell Wes – Altus & Marion Erasmus  
7<sup>th</sup> – 9<sup>th</sup> Church of the New Testament – Rachel Adams  
11<sup>th</sup> – 12<sup>th</sup> Jubilee Community Church  
14<sup>th</sup> – 16<sup>th</sup> Christ Church Mens Weekend  
20<sup>th</sup> – 22<sup>nd</sup> a group from the Netherlands with the Internationaalhulpfonds visiting schools in SA  
26<sup>th</sup> – 30<sup>th</sup> Photographic workshop with Wicus Leeuwner

Please hold all our visitors in your prayers and give thanks for these bookings.

God bless and love, **Jane**