

## **Keith Brown and Family (1978 – 2010)**

Ever since Stuart, my first born of 3 sons, was born in 1978 our boys filled our lives. I can remember Stu in his push cart supporting me umpire cricket Saturday after Saturday. He also supported me playing rugby before he could walk!

My memory is flooded with good times with the family God gave me - Jane , Stu, Geoff and Rowan.

Church life played a significant role. My boys grew up with other kids who are still their friends. Sunday school plays , “Leading Little Ones to God”, catechism and other “family devotion” books at the supper table.

And sport! Ten meter badges and mini galas where they all stood on the winner’s podium! Then all the years of cricket and rugby from mini rugby to Geoff playing for Natal U17 and Varsity 1<sup>st</sup> when still U21! His winning cricketer of the year at Randburg club. Stuart’s excellent away swingers that won many games for Kearsney! Rowan’s great arm with many direct hits and his speedy breaks on the wing! Dancing around the room and hugging each other when Natal won the Curry Cup for the first time!

And holidays! Cape Town at Gran’s. (Geoff was a few weeks old on his first trip!) Many walks up Table Mountain. Cricket at Newlands. Awesome beaches with beach cricket and ice-cream! How many ‘Berg hikes with sleeps in caves?. Geoff being introduced to fly fishing when about 4! He still loves it! Went fishing the morning of his wedding!! Two ski trips to Aspen where all three boys cruelly mocked me for my cautious approach! Game reserves – Kruger, Umfolozi, Galagadi.

Of course, it was not all plain sailing, We all felt deep pain when Jane decided to leave the marriage in 1998 with the reason devastating to my sons. This was an especially close time for Stu, Ro and myself as we worked together to run the household. Stu became an excellent purchasing manager and chef as well as taxi for Rowan from time to time. Geoff was at Varsity in Pietermaritzburg and visited from time to time. We also often went to watch his rugby games whether at Pmb, Durban or Toti.

After qualifying Stu and Geoff went to work in Johannesburg as Rowan adjusted to the Grobler family in his home after I married Barbara. He missed his brothers and began wobbling at school. Barb or I took him to counseling in Pmb once a week.

Stu and Geoff gave moving tributes at my surprise 50<sup>th</sup> birthday and I still have a picture of the whole family at that evening as a bookmark in my bible.



I will never forget the day Stu came to watch rugby with us at his Gran's house on my property (this used to be a regular thing) and he showed her two small lumps on his neck and asked "what are these Gran?" She asked how long they had been there and when he said "I don't know - about six weeks" she freaked and insisted that he visit the doctor the next day. Our hearts and lives were seriously shaken when he was diagnosed with melanoma. The day we received confirmation of the results we sat in my mom's lounge and wept and prayed together. Stu was amazingly calm and spoke of somehow having been prepared for this. He underwent immediate surgery to remove the lumps and the original site of the melanoma on his back.

Stu had been considering emigration. He now decided to be near family as he faught this disease. Looking back this was a confirmation of the family spirit that prevailed among the "Brown Boys" and Gran.

It was around this time that he started attended GGC (CTMI partner church in Durban) with some old friends and shortly after that became very involved.

Louise returned from the UK and soon Stu and Louise were married.

While a few slight concerns emerged regarding "extra biblical revelation" and their pastor not needing to prepare sermons because "that would stifle the Spirit" I remained positive about Stu's spiritual journey. A few months later we endured the trial of Stu going through a major operation to remove tumours from his bowel. His quiet spirit and patience in enduring the pain deeply blessed us.

However, we did notice slight hints of what was to come in that while we thought as family we would be involved in lifting Stu to and from the hospital GGC folks assumed this role. Also, while visiting when there were a number of GGC visitors I sensed a slight feeling of strain and awkwardness. Almost like they felt we were intruding.

Not long after the op Stu resigned his job and decided to freelance from home. My brother had financed a car for them. Lou began looking for job and I was able to arrange employment with Toyota for her.

Then out of the blue, with no discussion, Stu announced he was going to Mauritius. Louise, a master's in engineering, had publicly thanked God for an excellent job with Toyota facilitated by Keith. However only 3 months later she resigned to go to Mauritius with Stuart.

Stuart's younger brother, Geoffrey, left a high powered job in London and also joined GGC upon his return. After marrying Terri, who had a specialist graphic animation design job in Johannesburg, they also moved to Mauritius.

Real concerns with GGC/CTMI were triggered when Keith and pastor Clint Archer arranged a meeting with Basil O Connell Jones over the sudden departure of one of their young members (Rachel) who had a number of positions of responsibility. She maintained that God had made it clear that she should move to GGC to the complete disregard for her Sunday School class and youth group. She said she would listen to no one (parents and elders) but Basil. The purpose of the meeting was to arrange a more reasonable and peaceful transfer between two Christian churches with the same mission.

Basil was belligerent, arrogant and unyielding, calling Keith and Clint "pathetic pharisees", telling them to take the planks out of their eyes and accusing them of being fearful of losing people because GGC had something HBC did not have – "apostolic anointing and revelation". When Keith and Clint appealed to scripture relating to honouring father and mother they were told to stop quoting verses – "that's a dead letter" and that Jesus had not come to bring peace in families but a sword. It became clear that open and balanced discussion with Basil seemed impossible and Clint ended the meeting.

In August 2008 Stuart was diagnosed with a brain tumour in Mauritius and immediately returned to SA. He and Lou lived at home with his family for five months during intensive treatment. They had no earnings and were fully cared for and loved.

Over Christmas they were asked to house sit for a GGC family and simply never returned. Keith and family asked no questions and faithfully visited their son in a home where the folks had made "false gospel", "broad road", "You need to be broken" accusations against Keith and Hillcrest Baptist Church. The reason was then given that GGC folks were uncomfortable visiting Stuart on Keith's property due to the tension that followed the Rachel issue and the meeting with Basil mentioned above.

As Stuart's health deteriorated Keith made an impassioned plea for the privilege of caring for his son at home again for his last days. This was not even acknowledged. A request for discussion on these matters with Stuart, Lou and Geoffrey by Keith, his wife and mother was turned down. Geoffrey, who had returned from Mauritius to help care for his brother and who was jobless, chose to pay to stay in Basil's home (Pastor of GGC) when there was free accommodation in the loving Christian home where he grew up!!

Upon Stuart's death in Hospice, GGC folks brought youngsters completely unknown to the family into the room.

Although the parents offered to be involved in the funeral arrangements these were fully taken over by GGC. Keith however paid the bill.

At Stuart's funeral, after moving family tributes – Basil spoke for an hour and hijacked the event seemingly for his own personal agenda by attacking his detractors and defending himself. Many walked out – unheard of at a memorial service - and the family received a glut of angry feedback about the egotistical, aggressive and entirely inappropriate and repetitive diatribe which was entirely without Christian compassion and love.

Louise returned to Mauritius and Geoffrey and Terri have had a lovely daughter Joey whom the grandparents have yet to see. Geoff, Terri and Lou have accused Keith of persecution and indicated that the relationship is in jeopardy unless he withdraws from the Concerned Parents Group.

Keith does not hold his sons and their wives responsible. Rather the GGC brainwashing and influence which requires them to distance themselves from previous connections and influences – especially family.