

**Greg and Sarah Akers**  
**2025 ZEMA Annual Report**

*"[2025] is not a year on which I shall look back with undiluted pleasure..."*

This paraphrase is taken from the Queen of England's 1992 speech in which she coined the term *annus horribilis* - a horrible year. While we did not have the same types of obstacles to happiness that the royal family did in 1992, we had plenty of our own obstacles to overcome through the year.

Of course, it would be unfair to consider only the darker sides of the year. It has been grounded on God's unfailing promises and faithfulness, and peppered with exciting experiences, opportunities and hopes. As we arrive at the end of the year, we stand grateful that God has kept us, prayerful that next year will be less strained, and certain that regardless God will remain, above all else, Sovereign and Good.

Illinois visit...

Our year began with an unforgettable visit to Illinois, USA, where we were able to experience snow (!), and grow relationships with truly remarkable folk. Not only did this strengthen our ties with our inviting Church - Northbridge - but also built a new bridge of relationship with CCC.

Dad's health...

Our return from America coincided with the start of a very difficult year for Greg's parents, especially in relationship to his Dad's health. He suddenly felt tremendous pain in his legs and spine and was almost unable to walk, which led to a spinal fusion/cyst removal operation which ended in what appeared to be Post Operation Delirium. Greg spent some weeks with his parents as they were in and out of hospital dealing with the triple challenges of cancer, healing spinal fusion, and delirium.

Later on, through the year, Greg had to make two more emergency runs to Nelspruit for some more weeks of support as his Dad would later have a bad reaction to new cancer medication and revert back to delirium and weakness. These were times of real difficulty for the whole family - Greg's parents who were going through it, Greg and his sister Naomi who spent much time there helping wherever needed, and also for Sarah and the girls as Greg was away for long periods of time.

Greg's health...

About a month after returning from Nelspruit in February, Greg's health went down as well, and he was struck with chronic fatigue. Months of tests followed, but no cause for the fatigue could be found. Greg was unable to do any exercise and often found any activity detestable. During the worst of this time Greg would sleep up to 18 hours a day and still suffer with exhaustion headaches. Of course, this put significant strain on Sarah who had to shoulder the extra load of looking after the house and children without much support. She has said many times that God gave special grace to sail safely through this difficult season.

We learnt to live with the fatigue largely by adjusting expectations. Greg stepped back from some ministry activity, and in the run up to especially straining times (such as the Malawi trips), he would be very careful to conserve energy. Finally, after 7 months, the fatigue has begun to clear. It is still there, but to a much lesser degree than formerly.

Rayah and Olivia

Rayah started grade R this year and has enjoyed the introduction to "big school." One of the characteristics we see growing in her is resilience. Although she can be reserved in situations, we see that she is not afraid to do difficult things.

Livvy has adjusted to being in a bigger class. She started the year cautious and timid and quickly became more confident. She is our chatterbox and we delight in hearing all her wonderful stories from school and her friends.

#### Ministry...

Ministry started on a high note in 2025, having the chance to a supporting Church in America - Northbridge Church in Antioch, Illinois. While there we were able to reconnect with old family friends, make new connections, and experience Zion City. This was an unforgettable experience for us as a family.

On returning, Greg acted as a go-between between Northbridge Church donors and a ministry partner - Pastor Johannes Mokoena - in the construction of a Church for his congregation. Up until this point, Pastor Mokoena's Church had met in his little one-room shack, and the construction of a bigger premises was sorely needed for his growing congregation.

Over Easter, Greg travelled with Luaan Goosen across parts of the Eastern Cape, and into the Free State and Kwa-Zulu Natal. In these places we showed the Jesus Film, preached gospel messages, and evangelised using the Heart of Man chart.

Shortly after this we took our first trip into Malawi for 2025. It was round two of the ZEBS classes in Blantyre, where we teach 3 seminars over three days (90 lessons total). This class, and all the classes since then, were marked by very encouraging testimonies of lives being changed, families being transformed, and people committing their lives to Jesus and His teachings.

In July we took a trip to visit supporting Churches and people in Johannesburg. And soon after this, Greg travelled again with Luaan Goosen and Ron Eardley to Malawi. This trip was marked specially by a 'mass wedding' Luaan conducted at the end of the weekend for the Church leaders who were there. 6 couples committed their marriages before the Lord for the first time.

In August, Greg travelled up to Sunbury Christian Camp to attend and assist in teaching at the annual Zion Bible Teachers Conference. It was a time of reconnecting with beloved old ministry partners, and making plans to partner in future ministries.

Shortly after this, one of the great tragedies for the Akers family of 2025 occurred when Luaan and Susanne Goosen set out for America to settle Katelyn there. This was the loss of ministry partners, dear friends, and very valuable support.

This meant a fair deal more on Greg's plate for ministry as Greg took on the responsibility for Luaan's classes and ministries (fortunately, only a few of them). Greg's increased activities outside the home meant an increase of Sarah's responsibilities for the home. We are grateful to the Lord that Greg's seven-month long struggle with fatigue began to dissipate shortly before this, giving Greg the freedom to do more.

October was the last trip into Malawi for 2025. With Luaan unable to attend, we were exceedingly grateful to have a new addition to the team in Timon Steiner. Timon had also grown up in Malawi, and so was able to easily connect with the people when we landed. What a joy it was to have him on the team.

This third trip into Malawi was specially marked by our first Graduation service for those students who had completed first-year of ZEBS. There was much joy and celebration as the people received their certificates.

After returning from Malawi, Greg went on to Mozambique to connect with Pastor Zacarias Muiambo and to conduct the wedding of his brother in Maputo. This was Greg's first solo trip across land borders and, while challenging, was glad to get through without major troubles.

Our year-end graduation in the Eastern Cape took place at the end of November in King Williams Town.

Throughout the year, Greg continued to teach and assist in the classes in King William's Town, Grahamstown, and Mdantsane, and since Luaan left also in Willowvale. These classes go through ebbs and flows, but continue to be hampered by an animosity coming from pastoral fraternalists who are not happy with the teachings given in the classes that go against their practices. Of particular contention is the teaching against speaking to the dead. Though the Bible explicitly teaches against it, many of the Church leaders are not even aware of the biblical teaching on the matter, and when they hear about it, they choose to ignore it.

Nonetheless, there are still many Church leaders who come to these and other classes across the Eastern Cape.

Throughout this year, Sarah has also been much active in ministry. She has taught alongside Susanne Goosen at a girls' school in King William's Town. She also teaches Sunday School regularly at our local Church and still doing counselling. Sarah also had the opportunity to participate in training over a four-month period that will allow her to conduct assessments for children. This type of assessment explores a child's experiences through his perspective and will hopefully give a voice to children who may not have previously had chance to have their needs voiced.