

This Prophetic Word Is Uniting Nations Around the World

The fulfillment of a 31-year-old prophetic word spoken by an Oklahoma pastor to a machinist and his worship-leader wife in 1984 is leading them to say like the lead character in *The Wonderful Wizard of Oz*, “I’ve a feeling we’re not in Kansas any more.”

Indeed, South Africa is a long way from Buhler, Kansas, but Tracy and Becky Spencer are planning to build their second home in Swaziland—this one for orphans of HIV/AIDS. They believe like Dorothy, the Kansas farm girl in the 1900 children’s novel and 1939 film, “There’s no place like home.”

The Spencer’s home and ministry, Grand Staff Ministries Inc., is located in rural Kansas and has grown from a sponsorship program for orphaned Swazi children in 2006 to a nonprofit Christian charity that’s drawing support from across the United States and South Africa.

And their Kansas home, believe it or not, is as much a part of the Spencer’s ministry as a future orphanage in Swaziland and their support of orphans.

This year Grand Staff Ministries, Inc. (GSM) received sizable cash contributions—one from a widow in the United States—to to build an orphanage in Swaziland and two offers of land from benefactors in South Africa. The American woman, a Swazi pastor and apostle, and Christian leaders in South Africa have told the Spencers they want to help fulfill the prophetic word and vision for their ministry.

In July 2015, the Spencers traveled to Swaziland to see a large parcel of land next to a Christian school administered

by an African apostle who oversees multiple churches. Pastor Solomon Fasmande told the Spencers, who were in Swaziland to “prayer-walk” the acreage, that he wanted to give it to GSM for an orphanage.

While there, the Spencers learned from an American couple doing ministry in Swaziland that they recently purchased land from a South African chief—and all of them believe the tract is compatible for an extension of Grand Staff’s prophesied ministry vision.

Praying about where to build is as high a priority for the Spencers as is registering the planned orphanage as a non-governmental organization, and the finalization of architectural plans for it. Experts in both fields have offered their services for free to fulfill the prophetic vision.

“So we are content and eagerly anticipating the fulfillment of His dream, not just ours,” Becky Spencer says. “We know the one in our hearts comes from Him because of the sure, prophetic word, but it is not always clear at first.”

The Spencer’s vision for building Christ-centered orphanages in Swaziland, where 50 percent of men and 32 percent of women are infected with the immune system-destroying virus, looks and sounds like it’s the fulfillment of a prophecy given to them by an Oklahoma pastor more than three decades ago at a home Bible study.

John Hollar, who today is director of Christ For The Nations Institute in Dallas, Texas, looked directly at Tracy Spencer in 1984 and said, “You will be a father to many more than your eyes can see.”

At the time, the Spencers had four children in their home and one was on the way. The family eventually grew to eight—four adopted and four biological children—but it hardly numbered as far as the eye can see.

Until 2006, when the Spencers traveled to Swaziland on a missions trip, they pondered Holler's words. There, in South Africa, the Spencers saw untold numbers of children orphaned by HIV/AIDS, and wondered if they were Tracy's prophesied family.

"From the standpoint of the first time ever going on an overseas mission trip, it was very life-changing," Tracy Spencer says. "Just everywhere you turn there are kids on the streets, chasing your car, asking for help.

"Lots of them are complete orphans or living in an orphanage or on their own," says Spencer, who was also struck by the orphans inability to obtain an education like he had been denied as a teenager.

Back home in Kansas, sitting on their front porch praying about how Tracy might become a spiritual father to Swazi children, the Spencers both saw the same vision, simultaneously.

In what Becky Spencer calls an open vision, she and Tracy saw their home transformed into a haven for burned-out pastors, tired Christians, troubled marriages and weary travelers.

The vision became the footprint for Grand Staff Ministries Inc., a group of nonprofit missionary endeavors that extend from Kansas to South Africa.

Jesus cares for abandoned, orphaned and vulnerable children who are like lost lambs, says Becky Spencer. "The Good Shepherd's staff is grand enough to care for each one—through sponsors," she says, explaining the ministry name.

Since 2006, GSM has provided money to educate 209 Swazi children—several of whom have graduated college or trade school in recent years—with support from American sponsors. Sixty-one children are currently in school, courtesy of generous spiritual parents in the U.S. Five more are pursuing

post-secondary training.

The Spencers admit they've lost track of the number of trips to Swaziland but not the vulnerable people with whom they've "fallen in love" over the last nine years.

In 2010, 20 percent of the homesteads in Swaziland—or 195,000 children—were without adults parents, due primarily to deaths from AIDS. Four years earlier, when the Spencers first visited Swaziland, 11 percent of the homesteads were run by orphaned children—a more than 10 percent increase from 2006.

Today, an estimated one-half million people in Swaziland are infected with HIV; untold numbers don't know they're infected because of the stigma associated with the disease. Some people visit Christian mobile medical units after dark to receive anti-retroviral medications to avoid suspicion about their HIV status. Others refuse to be tested and receive life-saving drugs.

As real as the emotional pain HIV/AIDS produces in orphaned kids, so is the spiritual hunger back home in Kansas, where ministry begins.

The Spencer's residence, at one time a nursing home dating back to 1895, was converted to a bed and breakfast within a year of their inaugural trip to Swaziland. It, along with Tracy's work as a manager of trained machinists and Becky's speaking, writing and worship activities, help support GSM's budget and is itself a type of evangelism.

The Spencers saw their first guests in 2007 at what had been home for 23 years.

An admitted perfectionist, Becky Spencer had exquisitely furnished three bedrooms of the home for the people she and Tracy saw in the shared vision.

When the first guests arrived—an unmarried couple and two

women who requested that they sleep together—the Spencers didn't turn them away, nor did they refuse to share their Christian faith with them over breakfast.

The next morning, Becky Spencer discovered the lesbian couple had vomited throughout the bedroom—a result of excessive drinking at the Kansas State Fair—and she reached a breaking point, reminding the Lord of the vision he'd given her and Tracy.

In the silence, she heard the still, small voice of the Holy Spirit say, “You saw hurting Christians but I see a hurting world.”

As they cleaned the foul-smelling, soiled bedroom, the Spencers were reminded that loving people only like themselves—two ordinary Christians with a big vision for Swaziland—made them like biblical Pharisees instead of followers of Jesus, who commanded his disciples to be like salt and light.

In addition to travelers, the Spencer's seven grown children and numerous grandchildren sometimes occupy the 110-year-old homestead during visits—or out of necessity when they've no other place to go except back to dad and mom's place. Becky Spencer says her family has its share of dysfunction, and every member needs and finds God's grace at home.

Hundreds of guests have stayed at the Grand Staff B&B. Some guests come back annually because they've formed deep friendships with the Spencers and, in some cases, the guests have become supporters of GSM and Swazi children, even helping to promote the ministry.

“I believe the Lord has called the Spencers to Africa because of the words spoken to them, their individual experiences, as well as their godly input into the lives of their children and grandchildren,” says Dana Siscoe who, with her husband Clark,

first celebrated a wedding anniversary at Grand Staff B&B.

The Siscoes travel to Buhler several times a year—both to relax at the B&B and to help with ministry fundraisers. When they're staying at the B&B, the Siscoes serve as prayer warriors for the Spencers, who, like most families, have warts.

"They are all about doing the redemptive work of Jesus—loving people where they are at by showing them grace," Dana Siscoe says.

"They have a gift for loving people where they are at, showing them grace, and building relationships in the name of Jesus. Tracy and Becky honestly want to see peoples' lives healed and changed through a personal relationship with Jesus," says Siscoe, who doesn't mind the three-hour drive across Kansas to visit or help the Spencers.

"When I first heard Becky talk about Swaziland over breakfast, I knew the Lord was building a lifelong friendship with the Spencers because Clark and I have a heart for missions. We know the work they are doing in South Africa is for the children, for the Lord and for the glory of God's kingdom," she says.

An author, speaker and worship leader, Becky Spencer supports the Swaziland vision with financial offerings she receives from engagements at Christian conferences, churches and retreats. The offerings also help under gird the household budget.

Amid mixed audiences, Becky Spencer invites men and women to sponsor Swazi children at either \$25 or \$50 per month levels, enabling GSMs' sponsors to pay for students uniforms, tuition, books, fees and lunches.

She notes that donor contributions go directly to Swazi children—not to administrative costs like with bigger child-

sponsorship programs. World Vision and Children's Cup are two ministries helping to meet needs in Swaziland but committed resources are in short supply. Statisticians have used the word extinction to describe Swaziland's future.

"There are children in Swaziland who aren't being helped by any other organization yet," Spencer says.

The Spencers, who call themselves ordinary people who only want to serve Jesus, have steadily gained donor support in the U.S. and among pastors and churches in Mangcongco, Luhlokohla, Manzini and Motshane. They partner with GSM to reach needy Swazi children.

With multiple offers of land from Christian leaders in Swaziland for more than one orphanage, there's no shortage of money to build the first one, thanks to Barb Haley who in 2014 and 2015 promised enough cash to complete a 1,540-square-foot building for homeless or abandoned children.

Haley, who had just received a large insurance settlement after her husband's death, was planning to use a significant amount for a major home renovation until she attended a Christian conference where Becky Spencer talked about GSM and one Swazi girl in particular.

"I decided right then to give every penny of that money to the ministry to help fund this new home (for orphans)," says Haley. "I feel so blessed to know that God is allowing us to be a part in this undertaking. I can honestly say I have nothing but joy when I think of the project ahead," she says.

Becky Spencer spoke about Angel, a Swazi girl whose mother began locking her out of the home beginning in the third grade.

Eventually abandoned by her mother, Angel lived with her grandmother until she died. Now reunited with her mom, Angel reluctantly lives with other siblings from different fathers,

but she frequently runs away. Nobody knows Angel's birth date but, when Becky Spencer's daughter sponsored her, Angel assumed Sara Nolan's Jan. 7 birth date.

It's believed that Angel is 13 today but, because birthdays aren't celebrated in Swaziland and the dates are irrelevant, nobody knows for sure her age. One thing is certain, Becky Spencer says: A future orphanage will be named after Angel.

"Maybe 'Angels Watching' as in all day all night supervision of the children. The idea is that the Lord saw them first and he sends angels to keep watch over them," says Spencer, adding that Haley and the GSM board will have input into the name of the first orphanage.

Building orphanages is vital in changing the course of Swaziland's future, Becky Spencer says, but the success of sponsorship is profound, already. The benefits are evident in the lives of Swazi men and women—like Colane Nkambule—who've reversed personal, downward spirals education and connection to people who empower them through prayer and finances.

Nkambule, who is nearing his 30th birthday, in 2014 graduated college with a degree in broadcasting and media, thanks to the financial support of his American sponsor Penny Takeda. A GSM supporter from southern California, Takeda saw Nkambule's promise in secondary school and chose to maintain her investment in him throughout his university training.

Hired by the South African company where Nkambule completed his internship, his success defied the odds stacked against him.

Orphaned and uncared for by immediate relatives, Nkambule lived on the streets of Swaziland's capital city, Mbabane, for five years, stealing food from street vendors. His mischief devolved further into alcohol and drugs and probably would have drove him to the grave if not for the Christian ministries—including GSM—that helped Nkambule beat his

addictions.

Changed dramatically by Jesus and through relationship with Takeda, who consistently prayed for him, Nkambule gushes with gratitude for GSM, Swazi pastors and sponsors. He says they provide needy Swazi children the opportunity to live a responsible, honest, productive life.

Nkambule's achievements are incentives, the Spencers say, for them to continue fulfilling the prophetic words and vision for their ministry and its foundational verse, Isaiah 58:10, which states: "And if you give yourself to the hungry and satisfy the afflicted soul, then your light shall rise in obscurity, and your darkness shall become as the noonday."