

# AD CLERUM – December 2008

## **My Dear Sisters and Brothers in Christ**

As I was browsing through a book on pastoral care the other day, I was struck by the title of one of its chapters: "Loving the Stranger." The chapter itself was disappointing, but the title has remained with me and I find myself fascinated by the concept. Despite the fact that one would be hard pressed to find much by way of commentary on the concept of the 'stranger' in the scriptures, it is nevertheless an important word (and concept), occurring in its various cognate forms more than 250 times. And because it occurs so often and in so many differing contexts, and especially because concern for the 'stranger in our midst' is a recurring motif of the Torah, I think it warrants reflection.

Originally in ancient Canaanite custom, the 'stranger' was a refugee who came seeking the protection of a tribe other than his own. In the same way, in Israel, the 'stranger' is a foreigner who comes seeking sanctuary. Although afforded legal protection, because they did not enjoy the protection and benefits guaranteed by kinship, they were vulnerable to exploitation, abuse and, at times, even violence. And, as the land was vested in tribal divisions and could not be sold to a foreigner, the stranger was little more than a hired hand living in poverty.

Though the attitude towards foreigners shifted back and forth during the course of Israel's history, the harsh intolerance towards them seen in the time of the Judges, the campaign against mixed marriages by Ezra, and the hostility towards the Samaritans in the time of Jesus are all reminders that for Israel, as for so many in our own country today, the foreigner or stranger in their midst was regarded with a deep suspicion that bordered on hatred. For Israel, foreigners were primarily enemies, both politically and religiously; the alien is almost always alienated.

But ....

Even though the stranger might be regarded with deep suspicion, Israel's culture of hospitality demanded that the stranger be welcomed and treated as a guest. Hospitality was a duty - a work of mercy - for Israel could never forget its own history of being wanderers and aliens in the land. "My father was a wandering Aramean .... (Deut 26:5)." Abraham, Esau, Jacob, Moses, David, and, indeed, the people of Israel in Egypt – all were, at one time or another, 'strangers' dependent upon the hospitality and generosity of others and who, on some occasions, experienced the pain of exploitation. Small wonder, then, that showing hospitality to the stranger was a work of mercy. Survival depended upon hospitality, and no one could ever know when he or she might require it for themselves.

But there is more .....

Not only was Israel's wanderings as a 'stranger' imprinted on its psyche; it was foundational to their covenantal relationship with God. God had heard their cry and saved them when they were aliens in a strange land. In doing so God was revealed as one who cares passionately for the poor, the marginalised, the dispossessed. As God is the source of all blessings, so Israel is to be a source of blessing to others, especially those in need. And the 'stranger' is forever being mentioned in the Torah as those for whom Israel must care. "... (God) ... loves the stranger who lives among you, giving him food and clothing. You too must love the stranger; for once you lived as strangers in Egypt." (Deut 10:18).

It was God who had brought them into another strange land and given it to them as their heritage. But that land, as all land, remains God's own possession. And so, "...the land shall not be sold in perpetuity, for the land is mine and you are but strangers and sojourners with me" (Lev 25:23).

In fact, the word 'גר' (stranger) is used to describe Israel's own ongoing relationship with God. "Hear my prayer O Lord, listen to my cry for help," cries the psalmist, 'for I am your guest, a sojourner as all my fathers were.' (Ps 39:12). We who are strangers in the midst of God care for the stranger in our midst with the same love and compassion as God shows us.

And even more ....

The mystery of the incarnation is the mystery of the one who is Lord of all creation, but who comes to us in weakness and vulnerability as the stranger. "The true light which enlightens everyone was coming into the world. He was in the world, and the world came into being through him; yet the world did not know him. He came to what was his own, but his own people did not accept him. But to all who receive him, who believe in his name he gave power to become children of God..." The welcoming of the stranger becomes an encounter with salvation.

Abraham meets God in the visit of two strangers; the woman at the well meets God in a stranger at midday. Zacchaeus meets God in the stranger passing through Jericho; indeed the whole gospel story is a recurring recitation of God's love received as the stranger is welcomed.

Henri Nouwen says that our world today is "... full of fearful, defensive, aggressive people ... inclined to look at their surrounding world with suspicion, always expecting an enemy suddenly to appear." The result is, he says, that many if not most strangers become the victims of a fearful hostility. Our call is to move from hostility to hospitality by creating that holy space in which strangers may cast off their strangeness and become our friend. Parker Palmer speaks of the stranger in the role of 'spiritual guide' and says that "... the stranger is not simply one who needs us. We need the stranger ... if we are to know Christ and serve God in truth and love."

We need the stranger if we are to know Christ. The mystery of the incarnation is that to us who are strangers in the midst of God, God comes as the stranger in our midst. No longer are we asked to care for the stranger because our history requires it, or our God has commanded it, but we care because in welcoming the stranger we welcome the incarnate Christ (Matt 25: 35).

Advent is the time of preparation so that we may truly welcome the incarnate Christ not only in the now-familiar manger, but also in the stranger in our midst. Through the stranger our hearts are enlarged, our lives illuminated. In the stranger we receive so much more than we can ever give, for we receive the incarnate Christ.

May this Advent be a journey from hostility to hospitality. From isolation to the richness of the incarnate Christ.

+ Brian

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## **Year-Planner 2009 – The Yellow Pages**

As I mentioned in the last Ad Clerum, at our recent Strategic Planning Meeting a number of changes were proposed for 2009. After a great deal of further prayerful reflection and meeting with others, we are agreed on a course of action that we believe is God's will for us at this time. I will be speaking of this at our Clergy Day on 2<sup>nd</sup> December.

The Yellow Pages for 2009 will be e-mailed to you after the meeting together with some covering notes. If you do not receive it please contact the Diocesan Office for a copy before the 15<sup>th</sup> December. Please read the information carefully, noting the various changes. Highlight all dates of importance to you and your parish and make sure that those dates are entered into your diary, the parish diary and that everyone in your parish knows about all the dates that apply to them.

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## **Spiritual Formation**

**Clergy Day:** Our final Clergy Day for 2008 will be on Tuesday 2<sup>th</sup> December at St Francis, Parkview. I will be talking about our plans for 2009. You are all invited to lunch at the Bishop's House at 12h30.

**Clergy Quiet Day:** The next Diocesan Quiet Day at Bishop's House will be on Tuesday, 19<sup>th</sup> February 2009.

**Sermon & Liturgy Resources:** Check our new website for sermon, liturgy and other worship resources for Advent.

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## **Reading Recommendation**

A book that is easy to read, but is both thought provoking and practical is Jennifer Rees Larcombe's book, "Turning Point - Is there hope for broken lives?" It looks at how we are affected by the things that happen to us and damage us, and offers helpful insights into the processes of our coping mechanisms as well as practical suggestions about how we can process things differently to bring healing in the broken areas of our lives. It is a worthwhile read and I commend it to you.

An altogether different book which also deals with the themes of brokenness, forgiveness and reconciliation, is Miroslav Volf's book "The End of Memory – Remembering Rightly in a Violent World." Volf's work is a philosophical reflection of his own struggle to come to terms with abuse by political interrogators. It is not an easy read, but well worth the effort.

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## **Vestry 2009**

Preparations are already well under way in most parishes for Vestry 2009. Thank you. Our 2008 Vestry meetings were the most successful ever and I have every hope that in 2009 things will go even more smoothly.

Many of you found the timeline document that I distributed for the 2008 Vestry meetings helpful and so I enclose it again. In addition, the Yellow Pages give dates by which certain things need to be completed. You may find that of value also. Please use some of the time leading up to Vestry to do some teaching about the process of Vestry, the duties of a Churchwarden and Parish Councillor, what it means to be a servant leader, and about accountability to each other and the congregation.

### **1. General Instructions:**

These instructions apply equally to parishes and chapelries.

- i) **Final Date of Vestry:** Vestry must be held before *15 March* in each year.
- iii) **Financial Statements:** The Annual Vestry cannot be held until the Annual Financial Statements for the preceding year have been completed and either professionally audited or verified by an independent verifier approved by the diocese.
- iv) **Five Year Limit:** Anyone who has been a member of the Parish Council or a Churchwarden for five years of unbroken service is not eligible for re-election. A member of the Parish Council may be elected as Churchwarden at any stage in the five year period of service and may then serve as Churchwarden for a further 5 years. However, a Churchwarden who has completed a five year term of office may not be elected as a Parish Councillor.
- v) **Only laity may nominate and serve:** Only the laity may nominate people to serve as Churchwardens and Parish Councillors, and only the laity is eligible for nomination to serve as are churchwardens and Parish Councillors.
- vi) **Elections and Scrutineers:** Voting shall be by secret ballot. Scrutineers for the voting must be agreed to by Vestry and may not include the Rector or Priest-in-Charge.

## 2. Action Flow Chart for Annual Vestry:

- i) **End of Year:** Complete financial statements except for final adjustments.
- ii) **January:** Complete financial statements and send to auditor / independent verifier. Check when financials will be ready and set date for Vestry. Vestry must be before 15 March. Allow space for unforeseen delays.
- iii) **At least 22 days before Vestry:** Publish and display written *Notice of Vestry*. The notice must be signed by Rector and Churchwardens and must give the place, date, time, and agenda of Vestry. The Agenda for Vestry is set out in Rule H – 3 and in Direction 3 below.
- iv) **At least 22 days before Vestry:** Lists calling for *Nominations for Churchwardens and Councillors* must be put on the notice board. Nomination forms must be signed by the proposer, seconder and by the person being proposed.
- v) **The Sunday before Vestry:** (Or at least 6 days before Vestry) Nominations close.

## 3. Annual Vestry:

- i) **Chairperson of Vestry:** The Rector is normally the Chairperson of Vestry. Consult Rule H – 1.7.1 if the Rector is not available.
- ii) **Quorum at Vestry:** Ten parishioners form a quorum.
- iii) **Right to Speak at Vestry:** Only regular worshipers and those whose names appear on the Parish Roll shall have the right to speak. Good manners must always be observed.
- iii) **Agenda of Vestry:** The Annual Vestry Meeting will deal with the following business in the following order:-
  - o Confirmation of minutes of previous Annual Vestry Meeting.
  - o Presentation by Churchwardens of audited or verified annual accounts. Note: Accounts must be accepted by Vestry before moving on the next item of business.
  - o Report by Churchwardens on condition of Church property, which report must be received by Vestry and a copy forwarded to the Diocesan Office together with the required Vestry returns. Note: In addition to the churchwardens report shall include how they have fulfilled their duties in respect of the following:-
    - The provision and adequacy of computer, fax, internet, photocopying, and telephone services for the parish;
    - Adjustment of insurance cover for to ensure adequate cover for parish property;
    - An annual review of the Memorandum of Understanding between parish clergy and parish council;
    - Confirmation that proper records and inventories as required by the Canons and Rules of the Diocese have been kept.
  - o Report by Rector on care of the parish including a statement of needs, which report must be received by Vestry and either accepted or amended. A copy of this report must be sent to the Diocese together with the required Vestry returns. The report shall include:-
    - An evaluation of parish ministry over the past year, together with a report on the areas where there has been growth or decline that ministry, especially in respect of the key points of the Diocesan Vision;
    - A statement of the goals and objectives of the Parish Council set in respect of the coming year;
    - The identification of any areas requiring special attention either because of circumstances that have arisen in the life of the parish or the wider community.
  - o Presentation by Churchwardens of budget for ensuing year. Report must be received by Vestry and accepted or amended.
  - o A decision by Vestry on the number of persons who will serve on Council.
  - o Election of Churchwardens and Parish Councillors for ensuing year.
  - o Appointment of auditor or independent verifier for ensuing year.
  - o No other business may be transacted.

## 4. Vestry Returns to Diocesan Office:

Within one week of Vestry, the Rector must ensure that the following documents are submitted to the Diocesan Secretary:-

- o Copy of the audited or verified Financial Statements;
- o Copy of the budget for present year;

- Copies of the Churchwarden's Report and the Rector's Statement of Needs;
- Declaration of those elected as Churchwardens, Alternate Churchwardens, and Parish Councillors (duly signed by all persons elected).

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### **Debt Counselling**

In the tough economic times in which we find ourselves, many people are finding themselves in serious financial difficulties and facing the possible repossession of cars, furniture and homes. With counselling arrangements can be made that will prevent such repossessions and provide a way out of the mess. Gwyn Slade has been accredited as a Registered Debt Counsellor by the National Credit Regulator as is offering her skills to us as a part of her ongoing ministry to the church. If you or someone you know needs help, contact Gwyn on Tel: 011 693 1986.

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### **Fellowship of the Servants of Christ**

In December 2007, with my blessing, Sheena Hartgill established a support group for those who had been through our diocesan discernment process and who had not been discerned at that time as having a vocation to the ordained ministry. The intention of the group, which calls itself "The Fellowship of the Servants of Christ" was to help each other discern where and to what God was calling them, and to make themselves available to the wider diocese should anyone wish to make use of their gifts and skills.

I have heard that some of them are experiencing problems with some of the clergy and I am therefore writing to say that, as a group, they continue to have my blessing. I hope that you will all give them your full support and help them in this process of continuing discernment. If any of you have had problems with any of them, rather than withdrawing your support and opposing them, please speak to me so that we can resolve the issues. This is a small group of people with valuable gifts who truly long to serve God in new and powerful ways. Let us support them.

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### **STILIM Lay Training Programme**

Because of the success of the STILIM Lay Training Programme in 2008, we will be repeating it in 2009. If you would like to develop your lay leadership through STILIM, please contact Xolani Dlwati on Tel 011 315 9631 (home); 011 805 5201 (office); or email: [stmonnica@telkomsa.net](mailto:stmonnica@telkomsa.net) now.

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### **Family News**

#### **Provincial News:**

- The Elective Assembly for the Diocese of the Highveld will take place from 12<sup>th</sup> – 14<sup>th</sup> February 2009 and the date for the Consecration will be the 25<sup>th</sup> April 2009. Please pray for this Diocese as they prepare in the months ahead for their Elective Assembly.
- The **Rt Revd Paddy Glover** has been appointed Dean of the Province. Please keep Paddy and his family in your prayers as he settles into his new position.

#### **Diocesan News:**

- Our Siyafundisa Field Worker, **Jabulani Miya's** 10 year old daughter **Puleng** was admitted to hospital after falling off a bus. She has a fractured skull, but she has now been discharged from hospital. Please keep her and the family in your prayers at this time.

- **Liz Klingenberg** has undergone major back surgery and is now recuperating at home. She will be off work for some time. I am sure that she would, in a few days, appreciate a call. Please keep her and Wilhelm in your prayers during the long convalescence period.
- **Gerard Sharp** has been struggling with sinus problems for much of this year. It has now been discovered that he has a huge and every extensive tumour in the sinus cavities. Thankfully the tumour is benign, but will require major surgery to remove. The surgery is scheduled for 1<sup>st</sup> December. Please uphold him and Pearl in your prayers.
- **Justin Dodd** was awarded his MPhil in Theology (with distinction) from St Augustine's University on 31<sup>st</sup> October 2008. Our congratulations to him on this achievement.
- **Frs Joe Rakale** and **Ranthite Namu** will both be celebrating the 50<sup>th</sup> Anniversary of their Ordination to the priesthood on 14<sup>th</sup> December 2008. Our congratulations and blessings to them on this wonderful achievement
- Please note that the **Diocesan Office** will be closed from lunch-time on Wednesday 24<sup>th</sup> December 2008, and will re-open on Monday 5<sup>th</sup> January 2009. The Diocesan Office staff would like to take this opportunity to wish you all a blessed and peaceful Christmas and New Year.

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## Dates for Diary

### DECEMBER:

Mon 1 <sup>st</sup>	<b>World AIDS Day</b>	
Mon 1 <sup>st</sup>	<b>Diocesan Welfare Committee:</b> JP Centre, Bishop's House	10h00
Mon 1 <sup>st</sup>	<b>Retirement Housing Committee:</b> St Martin's, Rosebank	16h30
Tues 2 <sup>nd</sup>	<b>Clergy Day Year End Party:</b> St Francis' Bishop's House	09h00-15h30
Wed 3 <sup>rd</sup>		
Fri 5 <sup>th</sup>	<i>Independent Schools Close</i>	
Sat 6 <sup>th</sup>		
Sun 7 <sup>th</sup>	<b>Bishop's Archdeaconry Visit:</b> Good Shepherd, Tladi	09h00
Sun 7 <sup>th</sup>	<b>Institution:</b> The Very Revd Oupaki Moruthane – Rector, Meadowlands	15h00
Tues 9 <sup>th</sup>	<b>St Benedict's Spiritual Support Group</b>	
Fri 12 <sup>th</sup>	<b>Mothers' Union:</b> Office Closes	
Sat 13 <sup>th</sup>		
Sun 14 <sup>th</sup>	<b>Centenary Celebration:</b> St Aidan's, Yeoville	
Mon 15 <sup>th</sup>		
Tues 16 <sup>th</sup>	<b>DAY OF RECONCILIATION</b>	
Sat 20 <sup>th</sup>		
Sun 21 <sup>st</sup>		
Wed 24 <sup>th</sup>	<b>DIOCESAN OFFICE CLOSSES AT 13h00</b>	
Thurs 25 <sup>th</sup>	<b>CHRISTMAS DAY</b>	
Fri 26 <sup>th</sup>	<b>DAY OF GOODWILL</b>	
Sat 27 <sup>th</sup>		
Sun 28 <sup>th</sup>		
Mon 29 <sup>th</sup>	<b>DIOCESAN OFFICE CLOSED</b>	
Tues 30 <sup>th</sup>	<b>DIOCESAN OFFICE CLOSED</b>	
Wed 31 <sup>st</sup>	<b>DIOCESAN OFFICE CLOSED</b>	
Thurs 1 <sup>st</sup>	<b>DIOCESAN OFFICE CLOSED</b>	
Fri 2 <sup>nd</sup>	<b>DIOCESAN OFFICE CLOSED</b>	
Sat 3 <sup>rd</sup>	<b>DIOCESAN OFFICE CLOSED</b>	
Sun 4 <sup>th</sup>	<b>DIOCESAN OFFICE CLOSED</b>	
Mon 5 <sup>th</sup>	<b>DIOCESAN OFFICE RE-OPENS</b>	

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## Moves, Appointments and Vacancies

- **Andrew Payne** has been appointed Interim Pastor in the Parish of Christ the King, Coronationville as from 1<sup>st</sup> December, 2008. I commend him to your prayers.
- **Luke Pato** has been appointed Interim Pastor of the Parish of Christ the King, Sophiatown with effect from 1<sup>st</sup> January 2009. We wish him God's blessing for his time at Sophiatown.
- As part of his training, **Sam Moloi** will move to St Andrew's, Pimville with effect from 1<sup>st</sup> December 2008. Please keep him in your prayers during this time of transition
- **The Archbishop of Canterbury** is looking for a Secretary for International Development to serve at Lambeth Palace. The job entails advising the Archbishop in matters of international development relating to the Anglican Communion, overseeing the international development team and working collaboratively with external partners and secular government. The applicant must be a committed Anglican, lay or clerical. Further information: [www.archbishopofcanterbury.org](http://www.archbishopofcanterbury.org).

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## Birthdays

Please remember the following persons in your prayers as they celebrate birthdays and anniversaries in the coming months:

### DECEMBER

2 <sup>nd</sup>	Chris & Alison Viljoen (W/A)
7 <sup>th</sup>	Royce Meyers
7 <sup>th</sup>	Hilary Owen
7 <sup>th</sup>	Godfrey & Wendy Henwood (W/A)
8 <sup>th</sup>	Fecilia Molipa
8 <sup>th</sup>	Cyril & Hazel Halkett (W/A)
9 <sup>th</sup>	Julia Njumbuxa
9 <sup>th</sup>	Steve Ratshefola
9 <sup>th</sup>	Gavin & Helen Smith (W/A)
11 <sup>th</sup>	Linda Williams
12 <sup>th</sup>	Xolani & Mathabo Dlwati (W/A)
12 <sup>th</sup>	David & Margaret Eades (W/A)
13 <sup>th</sup>	Adrian & Susan van Niekerk (W/A)
13 <sup>th</sup>	Mpho Chaane
14 <sup>th</sup>	Martin & Michelle Louw (W/A)
15 <sup>th</sup>	Beryl Bailey
16 <sup>th</sup>	Puleng Modisaesi
16 <sup>th</sup>	Lefetlho & Dolly Lethoko (W/A)
18 <sup>th</sup>	Bikitsha & Julia Njumbuxa (W/A)
19 <sup>th</sup>	Dan & Patricia Ngqumeya (W/A)
21 <sup>st</sup>	Gabriel & Jemaima Tholo (W/A)
21 <sup>st</sup>	William & Beatrice Mpupu (W/A)
21 <sup>st</sup>	Charles & Tebogo May (W/A)
24 <sup>th</sup>	Roderick Walmsley
26 <sup>th</sup>	Audrey Hick
27 <sup>th</sup>	Rams & Thembi Ramokgopa (W/A)
27 <sup>th</sup>	Joe & Mabatho Rakale (W/A)
27 <sup>th</sup>	Allan Williams
28 <sup>th</sup>	Alan & Diana Keartland (W/A)
28 <sup>th</sup>	+Peter & Gill Lee (W/A)
30 <sup>th</sup>	Gayle Wilson

### JANUARY

1 <sup>st</sup>	Nomathemba Ramokgopa
2 <sup>nd</sup>	Athol Wanckel
3 <sup>rd</sup>	Alison Viljoen
4 <sup>th</sup>	Shirley Anderson
6 <sup>th</sup>	Cynthia Botha
6 <sup>th</sup>	Hazel Halkett
7 <sup>th</sup>	Ernie Quickfall
7 <sup>th</sup>	John & Gail Westwood (W/A)
9 <sup>th</sup>	Barry Beckley
11 <sup>th</sup>	Douglas Michael
14 <sup>th</sup>	John Herbert
14 <sup>th</sup>	Alfred & Maud Khumalo (W/A)
15 <sup>th</sup>	Archie & Thokozile Motaung (W/A)
15 <sup>th</sup>	John & Lorraine Williamson (W/A)
16 <sup>th</sup>	Dennis & Rosaline Francis (W/A)
16 <sup>th</sup>	Karen Uitzinger
17 <sup>th</sup>	Pamela Lamb
18 <sup>th</sup>	+Sigi & Dorcas Ndwandwe (W/A)
18 <sup>th</sup>	Lorraine Williamson
19 <sup>th</sup>	Bridget Edwards
19 <sup>th</sup>	Boitumelo Makata
21 <sup>st</sup>	+Brian
21 <sup>st</sup>	Saras Chinnah
22 <sup>nd</sup>	Di Buchanan
25 <sup>th</sup>	Joe Rakale
25 <sup>th</sup>	Jeanne Boyce
25 <sup>th</sup>	John & Florence Ntsoko (W/A)
26 <sup>th</sup>	Christine Lowick
26 <sup>th</sup>	Trevor Prince
28 <sup>th</sup>	Ntabiseng Moswatlhe
28 <sup>th</sup>	Paul Molefe
30 <sup>th</sup>	David & Bridget Edwards (W/A)
30 <sup>th</sup>	Pilane & Vicky Moroa (W/A)

**NB:** Please report any errors and/or omissions to the Diocesan Office on 011 336-8724.

# General Notices

## SAfm RADIO BROADCAST SERVICE

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The final Service for 2008 will be relayed on Christmas Day, ***Thursday, 25<sup>th</sup> December 2008*** at 11h05 from the *parish of St Luke's, Orchards*.

The Rector is The Revd Jerry Bailey. (011 728 7015)

## *Herald Christian Books*

Herald Christian Books has moved from Braamfontein to Linden.

Duncan Crombie has a big selection of Bibles, new & second-hand Books, Study Material, Posters, CDs & Gift items.

Address: Shop 9, Linhill,  
35 – 5<sup>th</sup> Street (cnr 4<sup>th</sup> Ave)  
Linden 2195.

Tel: 011 888 1980

