

PREACHER'S PATCH

'CEMENT DRYING'



Recently, we had some patchwork repairs made to our front driveway. Over the years the cement had started to work loose. We were very pleased with the work carried out by a local home maintenance man. (Mixing and laying concrete is not one of my skills!) When he finished, I took precautions to advise anyone using our drive, to avoid treading on the areas of drying cement. On some pieces of old wooden boarding, I wrote - "Wet Cement."

I am sure most of us have seen, or even experienced, what it is like if cement is walked on before it has set. The thought of 'drying cement' made me think of some lessons we can learn as disciples of Jesus.

Ephesian 5:15-16 in the Amplified Bible reads, *"Look carefully then how you walk. Live purposefully and worthily and accurately, not as the unwise and witless, but as wise (sensible, intelligent people), making the very most of the time (buying up each opportunity), because the days are evil."*

Every day, in our words and our ways (just like a footprint left in cement) we will make some kind of impression on the people we meet and share with at work, in the shops and our neighbourhood. Let us ask the Holy Spirit to help and strengthen us to live and witness for Jesus, in the manner that Paul instructed the Church at Ephesus.

As I watched our tradesman repair our drive - he made easy work of moving his trowel over the wet concrete - ensuring it was smooth, and blending it in with the other parts of the driveway, I hoped the cement would dry with no trace of human or animal footprints. (It did!)

This made me think of another discipleship lesson - (but this time - we are 'not to be like concrete that sets') In contrast; we must watch out, and ensure our hearts do not become hardened through unforgiveness, selfishness, doubt, and disobedience to God's Word of truth. Each time we read and hear God's Word and seek Him in prayer - He wants to speak to us. The writer to Hebrews warned, *"Today, if you hear His voice, do not harden your hearts ..."* (Hebrews 3:15)

The LORD says - "I will give you a new heart and put a new spirit in you; I will remove from you your heart of stone and give you a heart of flesh." (Ezekiel 36:26) May our hearts remain softened and sensitive as we listen to what the Holy Spirit is saying to us - and wanting to accomplish through our lives. (individually, and as His Church)

Jim Collins



WHAT IS SKRUM?

Eswatini (formerly known as Swaziland) in Southern Africa has the highest rate of HIV/AIDS infection in the world. With 28.8% of the population infected, life expectancy is just 51 years and 45% of the youth are classed as 'orphans and vulnerable children'.

SKRUM was founded by Michael Collinson in 2008 to offer hope to the youth of Eswatini.

SKRUM's mission is to reduce these figures and offer hope to the youth of Eswatini.

SKRUM uses the game of rugby to engage the children, at the same time educating the participants about HIV/AIDS, inspiring better leadership in communities, raising awareness of gender violence and promoting the benefits of school and education through rugby's core values:

RESPECT | DISCIPLINE | PASSION | SOLIDARITY | INTEGRITY

WHAT WE DO

OUR VISION: An equal Eswatini, free from HIV/AIDS infection.

OUR MISSION: To give hope to the youth of Eswatini. We use the game of rugby to engage the children, at the same time educating them about HIV/AIDS, inspiring better leadership in communities, raising awareness of gender violence and promoting the benefits of school and education.

OUR VALUES: We share rugby's core values of **respect, discipline, passion and integrity, solidarity.**

OUR STRATEGY: *Pass the Ball, Not the Virus*

Since 2008, SKRUM has visited 650 of the 817 schools in Eswatini and each year we reach 12,000 young people through school and community sessions. SKRUM introduces them to rugby and takes the opportunity to educate the children in HIV/AIDS, gender & health awareness and the social skills necessary for healthy and responsible living. SKRUM also provides dedicated classroom sessions, explicitly reinforcing the crucial and life-changing HIV/AIDS message.

After visiting a school, 'Sipho', the SKRUM logo, is painted onto a wall in order that the SKRUM message of ***Pass the Ball Not the Virus*** stays with the children long after the session has ended. During school holidays and weekends we run SKRUM rugby sessions and tournaments in local communities, reaching out to adults as well as children.

At this moment in time rugby is one of the fastest growing sports in Eswatini and figures for HIV/AIDS infection are starting to fall.

SKRUM is helping and so can you!