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Can you imagine having to live apart from your parents for most of your childhood?

In South Africa for a long time the law forced many parents and children apart. Many fathers and mothers from the countryside had to go away to towns and cities to work. Their children had to stay behind. For this was the land of apartheid – where the broken families were all black and the people who made the laws were white. We didn't often hear about the children who were cut off from their parents. We only got a glimpse of them through a short news item now and then.

Joyous end to hunt for mum

It was a joyous reunion yesterday for the schoolgirl who came to the big city in search of her mother – only with the little knowledge that she worked in Vincent...

It began as a door-to-door search in the hope that one of the knocks would be answered by her mother...

(The Daily Dispatch, 1/10/81)

Another report told of a boy who had always lived with his mother until he was caught up in a police raid and taken hundreds of kilometres away.

Boy of 11 attempted 1,289 km walk

An eleven-year-old boy who tried walking from Umtata in Transkei to Cape Town to be with his mother was reunited with her yesterday...

The boy said he had been born in Cape Town. Umtata was a strange place to him.

Asked why he wanted to walk back, he said simply: "My mother was in Cape Town and I wanted to be with her."

(The Cape Times, 26/9/81)

It will take a long time to repair the damage of apartheid. Journey to Jo'burg *may help you understand why. But many people have planted their hopes, like seeds. now they need to work hard at helping them grow.*

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