

NYLSTROOM NEWS

April 2008

NAMIBIA

Accommodation is very expensive in Namibia, but just before we left Windhoek last time we managed to find a small caravan to rent at a campground near Okahandja Park ("the hill"). The caravan is a lot cheaper than car rental, so we left our camper at home and traveled to Namibia in our new Avanza. It is very economical on fuel and it made the long drive so much easier. We have just arrived home after a month in Namibia and are recollecting some thoughts and actions of the past month. Spending time with Darlington was a great encouragement to us. His hard work and help with the driving was extremely valuable.

As always, there were morning studies at "the hill," taught either by myself or by Darlington. The average attendance on Sundays is about 15 adults, but for the past 2 years there have been only 6 Christians: Pius, his wife and two teen daughters, and two men who were converted elsewhere and moved to the area. Many different people have attended the morning Bible studies during our visits, but none have been willing to give up their immoral life-style of drinking and fornicating. However, Samuel, who has been attending services regularly for about 2 years, and who seems to have left those things, finally obeyed the Lord in baptism during our visit. The one daughter of Pius, age 16, who already has a child out of wedlock, made a public confession of sin and repentance during our visit as well. Darlington and I had to do a lot of teaching about this before she took this step.

The brethren at Donkerhoek truly gave us a warm welcome, making us feel so loved and appreciated. We had planned to have some rest days, but they were very few – and Darlington did not have any. Our goal for this trip was to further strengthen these brethren, especially in the area of loving and encouraging one another. Because they are young in age and in the faith, they sometimes have trouble dealing with different personalities and sinning brethren. This leads to some getting discouraged and falling away. While we were there, two brothers who had quit attending and were engaging in worldly sins confessed wrong and returned to the Lord.

A number of brethren at Donkerhoek invited non-Christian visitors to home Bible studies, and several were taught the gospel. The brethren have just acquired a reasonably-priced room they can rent that is more centrally located than Leon's house, and this will also facilitate attendance of visitors. Hopefully, it also will alleviate some problems that have arisen among weaker brethren who felt the church was too much "Leon's church" because they met at his house. We really feel the congregation is on the brink of real growth, but it is going to take more commitment on the part of the brethren than what they are consistently displaying at present. For this reason, we would like to return to Namibia within the next 2-3 months with the goal of encouraging them in the area of commitment.

One of Linda's goals was to get the women equipped to teach children's classes. The women have expressed that they feel equipped, but again, lack of commitment is a potential problem. We all joke about "African time," but the enthusiasm of the children can be so easily quenched by teachers who arrive either late or unprepared.

ZIMBABWE

As you've probably been hearing on the news, Zimbabwe is going through a very sad, troubled time. President Mugabe has still not released the results of an election that he seems to have lost, and has sent his loyal supporters to torture opposition party members and intimidate the public into voting for him in a supposedly necessary "run-off" election. So far as we know, none of the brethren have yet been directly affected by the violence. The brethren in Zimbabwe for the most part believe it is wrong to be involved in politics – and perhaps in their situation it is! As a result of the violence, it is not safe for visitors, especially in the rural areas; and the brethren are not allowed to hold special meetings outside of the usual Sunday worship meeting. For this reason it will be impossible for me to visit the 19 congregations that Bigboy and I have been messengers for regarding drought relief. I would have preferred to report first-hand about the drought situation, but since I cannot do that, I am passing on to you the letters that brethren have written (below). We need congregations or individuals to commit to funds for these brethren that will last through March 2009 (the next harvest time). If anyone can help, please write to me.

We sincerely plead with you to pray for Zimbabwe that peace will return to the country, that people will be able to provide for their daily needs, and, most importantly, that the gospel will be able to be freely preached.

We continue to thank you for your prayers on our behalf as we labor and travel in the work of Christ's kingdom.

Your brother in Christ, Les Maydell

DROUGHT RELIEF

Below is a list of the congregations who need relief for the next ten months. It would save many headaches if individuals or congregations would either give a one-time amount that would cover at least one congregation's needs for the entire 10 months, OR commit to monthly contributions for one or more congregation's needs for the next ten months. I need to have the first month's money by mid-May.

The amount needed is enough to buy 22 lbs of maize or maize meal per adult needy member per month. This is their staple food. They are able to supplement this by growing a small amount of vegetables next to dams or rivers or by pumping water from wells. Some may have a few chickens or goats. If you would like more details, please email or phone.

Congregation Those in need / total members Amount needed per month

1. Nhwali 46/63 \$138
2. Patana 36/55 \$108
3. Sibozha 29/32 \$ 87
4. Munyangane 17/21 \$ 51
5. M'halipe 30/52 \$ 90
6. Newline 14/19 \$ 42
7. Ngoma 42/61 \$126
8. Dendele 32/53 \$ 96
9. Whunga 28/52 \$ 84
10. Dombolidentje 16/21 \$ 48
11. Matshutshuta 20/32 \$ 60
12. Mashaba 25/30 \$ 75
13. Mapate 30/36 \$ 90
14. Gungwe 15/20 \$ 45

- 15. Selonga 40/62 \$120
- 16. Guyu 35/? \$105
- 17. Phelele 15/? \$ 45
- 18. Causeway 25/? \$ 75
- 19. Sengezane 30/? \$ 90

Below are the letters. Because not everyone speaks English and because of the expense of postage, at times one person wrote on behalf of more than one congregation (those congregations are in walking distance of each other). These letters below were posted directly to me. Other letters are still with Bigboy.

Dear brother

I am very pleased to have this chance to drop my letter into your hands. How are you brethren? Here we are all well. But the sad story is that my beloved daughter passed away on the 17th January, 2008 and buried her on the 29th. She left 2 children. One is 7 years and the other 3 years. She was only sick for one week.

Brother, on behalf of the following churches: Nhwali, Patana, Sibozza, Newline, Mhalipe and Munyangane, we thank you very much in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ for the great help you gave us since last year. Please pass our thanks to our beloved brethren, may God's grace and peace be with them.

As we entered into the new rain season, we were very pleased to receive some good rains. The rain came, everyone was happy, the rivers and dams were full and the land was green. As time went since January to February we have not received any rain. The crops are dying in the fields because of the sun. So because of this again it drives us to ask for a help (drought relief) for this year 2008.

We hope our request will meet your attention brethren.

Yours in Christ, N. Sithali.

Dear brethren

Thank you very much for the help of the drought since last year until now. We have combined our letter as the following churches: Ngoma, Dendele, Whunga, Dombolidenje, Matshuthutha, Mapate and Mashaba. We are thanking you very much. May your love continue.

We are writing to let you know that there is a big drought again this year. We have had worked hard in our fields but there was too much rains in November which affected our crops. We replanted again and there was no rains and our crops were squashed by the sun. Brethren, we are praying for your help to continue.

Thank you on behalf of the churches above. - T. Nyathi

To the brethren

We are greeting you in the name of Jesus Christ. We are writing to thank the help you are giving us. This help is really helping us. Brethren you may continue to help us because this year we have worked very hard in our fields but the problem there was too much rainfall so there was a lot of water logging, so we replanted but we are facing another problem of sun. The rain ended in January. The whole month of February it didn't rain so now we are facing another drought. Brethren you may continue helping us.

May God bless you. - N. Khoza, S. Ndlovu, A Ndlovu - Selonga Church of Christ

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