

# NYLSTROOM NEWS

February 2009

## ZIMBABWE

Last week we returned from our trip to Zimbabwe, making a quick visit to several areas of the south-western part of the country. We visited Guyu (Gwanda South), Dadata (Gwanda North), Saphila (Filabusi) and Bikimani (Mberengwe), as well as the Hillside and Kensington congregations in and near Bulawayo. I taught on marriage and on having a passion to serve Christ (Ps.37:3-4). The ladies requested Linda to speak on how to remain faithful when suffering and how to help their children when they cannot go to school. (Most children have not been to school for several months.) Everywhere we went the brethren were so excited about and thankful for the seeds and maize meal. Some said they were so hungry before the maize meal arrived they just did not know what to do. Each Christian got 10 kgs. Ten kgs will only last a family of 4 about 2 weeks, but they do work hard to grow food and get food from other sources (those in city congregations also receive food parcels), and they are coping. In some areas the maize is taller than I am and forming cobs. [Picture 1 below: Leliya with the maize grown from the seeds given by you brethren, Gwanda North Province]

The brethren are also very grateful for the good quality of the seeds which they say they are producing well. However, in other areas like Gwanda South, the rains came late and the maize is less than waist high. As we travelled, we noticed that some people were only beginning to plant now, having just received seed from the government. It is highly unlikely they will harvest anything. (Those who contributed towards seeds will receive a separate detailed report.) Please continue to pray that the rains will be right so that the brethren will harvest. In some areas now they are actually getting too much rain – which can also ruin the crops.

November - March is really not a good time to visit the rural areas of Zimbabwe for two reasons: the brethren are busy farming and the rain can make roads impassable. However the brethren seemed very happy to see us and made a tremendous effort to support the meetings, leaving their farming and walking long distances for just a few hours of teaching. Others were prevented from attending by swollen rivers. Unfortunately, we missed the last three days of meetings due to a combination of heavy rains, impassable roads, and a stone puncturing the radiator. (A couple of tubes of Prately's Putty I had stored in the camper saved the day, and enabled us to get back to civilization!)

Besides the spiritual uplifting that we trust we have given through our visit, we gained some important insights regarding drought relief. Providentially we were at the Kensington congregation (which meets near Gumbo's home) when the 30-ton delivery truck arrived to off-load 9.5 of the tons (the rest were offloaded at Bigboy's house).

It was good to get a better feel of the work involved and wonderful to see the eagerness of the brethren to do what they could to help with the mammoth task of off-loading.

We also felt what it was like to go at a snail's pace down corrugated, slippery and pot-holed roads (which are not maintained). I personally saw the damage done to Bigboy's and Gumpo's trucks, as well as suffering damage to our own camper, and I can assure you brethren that (as they request) they really do need financial help to repair their vehicles to enable them to do the drought relief work. These two men need to be commended for travelling hundreds of miles down nightmarish roads to deliver the maize meal, sometimes even travelling at night to avoid troublesome road blocks. I also spoke to many about the amount of assistance needed. All agree that 10kg is not really enough, but all understand how difficult it is for just two men to get the maize meal to them and they also appreciate that brethren all over the world are suffering financially and that some really sacrifice to give to them. They are really very grateful for what they have received as it has kept them from severe hunger. [Picture 4 below: Bigboy has just returned from delivering part of this mountain of "mielie meal" (maize meal)]

The delivery of 30 tons of maize meal each month has been a graphic picture of our brethren's love and of God's love and power. We cannot give enough thanks to the messengers in Zimbabwe and to you brethren. (Those who contributed towards maize meal will receive a separate, detailed report.) We have received enough to supply 10kg each to approximately 2800 Christians in 78 congregations through March and for about half of April. I was also told that, although the brethren should be eating off the land soon, they really need assistance until the maize has been harvested and dried, since only then can it be ground into meal, their staple food. So it will only be May or June before the brethren can really assess what their needs will be.

Finally, churches are growing. (There were 7 or 8 baptisms during our visit.) I also heard of two new congregations that have been started. Some "conversions" MAY be due to drought assistance, but the growth of churches is pretty much in-line with what we have always experienced, even in times when there was no relief – and no one at the two new congregations is yet receiving drought aid. Some churches are actually shrinking due to people dying or leaving the country. It is difficult to leave the country since Zimbabwe's neighbours are trying to keep Zimbabweans out, but 1/3 of Zimbabwe's former population is estimated to be living (both legally and illegally) in South Africa alone.

## NAMIBIA

We plan to leave for Windhoek, Namibia in about 10 days and be gone for about 3 weeks. As usual, we hope to encourage the two congregations there. Marvin and Becky Voyles of Madison IN hope to meet us there and work with us. We look forward to that.

## USA

Our daughter Gloria is due to give birth on February 13th. We pray that all goes well with her as she has had two difficult labors in the past. Our daughter Melody is due to give birth on May 22nd, and we hope to be there for that and to see Sam and Gloria's new baby at the same time. It is also Linda's mother's 85th birthday on June 6th. So we are trying to work our 2009 USA trip around those May and June events. This time we hope to also visit congregations who support us in the work and possibly also congregations who have been helping with the drought relief. We will not have time to see everyone, but we hope we will be able to see as many as possible. Please let us know if you would like for us to visit you. We hope to be in the TN/AL area during the first part of May, the FL area during the last part of May and the St Louis area during the first part of June. (For those of you who have just started receiving our newsletters, we have been very blessed to have brethren help us to see our children, grandchildren and Linda's mother once a year for the past 3 years.)

## PERSONAL

Yesterday was my 6-monthly cancer check-up. I was absolutely amazed when the doctor told me that since it had been 6 years since I was diagnosed, and my blood is better than his, he did not need to see me again! Linda and I truly give thanks to God who has allowed us to remain healthy enough to work in His kingdom. We also are truly grateful for your support to us personally and to the brethren. We ask you to pray for an end to the present distress in Zimbabwe and that we may have wisdom to do the Lord's work in a good way.

Your fellow-servant in Christ, Les Maydell

## MORE ABOUT DROUGHT RELIEF

We receive many enquiries about drought relief in other parts of Zimbabwe. When I report on the drought relief and the needs of the brethren, please understand that I am only reporting on the 78 congregations where I am a messenger. There are scores of congregations in other parts of Zimbabwe that I know very little

about. For congregations in the Harare and Mutare areas, I know that David Beckley is very active in trying to help with relief. At the moment he is in the USA and can be reached at [grannysa48@aol.com](mailto:grannysa48@aol.com). Mike Divis and the OH3 organization have been very active with helping in the areas north of Bulawayo and can be reached at [MikyD@aol.com](mailto:MikyD@aol.com). Drought relief in the Binga/Vic Falls area has up to this point seems to have been very spasmodic and comes through various individuals. You can contact Mike Divis or Bob Buchanon: [bobbuchanon@mindspring.com](mailto:bobbuchanon@mindspring.com). If you want to enquire about food parcels, please contact Paddy Kendall-Ball: [sandipaddy@yahoo.com](mailto:sandipaddy@yahoo.com). For clarity, I am listing below the names of all congregations where I am a messenger where each Christian has received 10kg of maize meal per month for the past two months (Gwanda South for the past two years). I know some of the brethren in the town congregations are getting food parcels, but if any congregations (where I am a messenger) are getting other forms of relief, I would appreciate knowing about it. My goal is not to designate who must give to whom, but simply to know what is happening so there can be equality – not for some to have excess and others to have too little.

Very important: Speaking from personal experience, and also having just received a letter highlighting that David Beckley has the same experience, I want to urge people to give (the need is great), but first investigate the person who is receiving funds, and then make SURE there is feedback from each congregation receiving the help – that they actually have received the help. Simple receipt books are readily available, even in Zimbabwe. In a country where people are so desperate, and have so little, even a little money is a great temptation. I have been sorely grieved that such well-intentioned generosity has at times led to such a sorry result as good brethren losing their souls and congregations suffering. If all of us messengers know that we are expected to give a thorough account of the money, it helps us to provide “honorable things, not only in the sight of the Lord, but also in the sight of men.”

#### LIST OF CONGREGATIONS:

Filabusi Province: Bikibiki, Jenda, Mabuze, Makoshe, Mashoko, Mkhayeni, Ntunteni, Nyamime, Saphila, Silalatshani Swinge.

Mberengwe Province: Bikimani, Bobokile, Bvute, Cheshange, Chingesi, Chizungu, Dolo, Garare, Gomtutu, Gwabamtenga, Keara, Mabantu, Marinazhombe, Matabo, Mbembesi, Mtsime, Mukhai, Rupange, Zenda, Zwabagabi, Zwerenge

Towns and other areas: Gwanda, West Nicholson, Colleen Bawn, Bulawayo (Hillside Afternoon, Queen’s Park, Magwegwe), Lupane (Mbembezi “David’s place”), Plumtree (Matginge), Masvingo area (a congregation started by Professor)

Gwanda North/Matabeleland South Provinces: Dadata, Edwaleni, Findo, Kensington, Matsholomotshe, Nswazi, Ntumbani, Sinkukwe, Stanmore, Pangani, Tombo

Gweru area: Cinderella, Hogo, Mangwande, Mankunzane, Somabula, Sunrise.

Gwanda South Province: Causeway, Dendele, Dombolidentje, Gungwe, Guyu, Mapate, Mashaba, Matshutshuta, Mkhalipe, Mnyangane, Newline, Ngoma, Nhwali, Patana, Phelele, Sengezane, Sibozza, Silonga, Whunga.

#### Money received:

I am sending a detailed report of all money received to those who contributed (whose email addresses I have). If you sent money to me, but do not receive a detailed report within the next day, please contact me.

Les Maydell

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Leliya



Delivery truck



**Help off loading meal**



**Bigboy's delivery**