

# NYLSTROOM NEWS

February 2006

**LESSONS FOR NAMIBIA:** Right now I am dictating this newsletter as we drive through the Kalahari Desert of Botswana. The roads are so quiet that at times you can travel 50 miles without seeing another vehicle in either direction – although there are plenty of cows, donkeys and goats that stand in the road from time to time. By the time we get home we will have done over 4000 miles in 3? weeks. During our many hours of travel to and in Namibia I dictated 2 lessons to Linda to type for me. One was on control – how we as individuals and how each congregation must be controlled by Christ and not by any other person or organization or congregation. The application of the lesson is that each person then must give sacrificially of his time and money so that the local congregation he is a part of can do its work properly – and not depend on a human organization (such as World Bible School) or churches in the USA to do their work for them or to finance their work. The follow-up lesson to this was on leadership – how men as individuals can develop leadership characteristics so that the congregation will be able to do its work in a way that brings much glory to God. I tried very hard to make the lessons practical. They were well received –I think because these are the issues that they are really struggling with.

**LUDERITZ** Our first stop was at Luderitz. To get there we had to cross the Namib desert – stark rock and sand dunes. However, for the first time, we had come immediately after some rare rain – and the sand dunes had a slight green tinge to them. Actually the whole of Namibia and Botswana are greener than we have ever seen them. And we hear that even Zimbabwe has had good rains. We rejoice with these people and ask that you not forget to pray that God blesses them all with enough good rain to get a plentiful harvest.

The 10-15 brethren at Luderitz are still being visited regularly by brethren from World Bible School who want to use their building as an office. However they have not agreed because they feel “used” by these brethren. They say these brethren come and take pictures and make videos and use them to raise money for their own benefit. This was echoed everywhere we went. Therefore we took almost no pictures on this trip. We spent a weekend plus two days at Luderitz, giving as many classes to the brethren as we could. We did a bit of door-knocking, but without visible results. On the Sunday morning at Luderitz I preached a lesson on sexual purity, particularly stressing practical ways men can overcome this problem. The man who does most of the preaching there told me that I must preach that lesson everywhere I go because it is such a major problem, sadly even among the brethren. So I took his advice and from the feedback it seems that the other brethren also felt it was a good lesson for them. Unfortunately on this trip we did discover that a young woman was pregnant out of wedlock, and from questions asked in Bible study I think another young couple is just living together.

**RUNDU:** It took three days to wash clothing, re-stock groceries, and drive over 1000 miles to Rundu on the northern border with Angola. A single Philipino lady, a Christian, has recently moved to Rundu to do volunteer work as a occupational therapist. Although Mini only knows institutional ways of doing things and was actually encouraged to be part of some mission, she decided to use her occupation to enable her to take the gospel to other places “like Paul.” She has obviously impressed her colleagues with her zeal, convincing one of them to drive her 20 miles to a Bible study that lasted several hours. He in turn told another colleague that this is a “good church” because the preacher really teaches what the Bible says and he does not do everything but allows others to participate. That colleague in turn then told his children that he was making it “compulsory” to attend “Mini’s church” from now on – and he drove the 20 miles twice to bring and fetch Mini and the five children, ages 6 to 16. John, whom we met by chance at the campground last year and baptized the same day, has been given nice accommodation inside the vocational college grounds where he lectures. Last week he received permission to use his classroom as a meeting place for the church. We pray that this will open many doors for this tiny congregation of seven members. Besides studies with Mini’s colleagues, I had a nice study with a neighbor with whom one of the members has been speaking. Amazingly he is married, both tribally and legally. I believe it is his drinking problem that hinders his obedience to the gospel. In Rundu there is a least one tavern in every block.

**WINDHOEK:** On our 1? day drive to Windhoek we received a text message to say that our daughter Gloria was in labour. Because their insurance would not yet cover childbirth, Sam and Gloria elected to have a natural birth with a midwife. Gloria had 31 ? hours of severely painful back labour, and hemorrhaged after giving birth to a 9lb,10oz(4,4kg) boy–Titus. We give thanks that the midwives were able to quickly control the bleeding, that Gloria has recovered well, and that Titus appears to be healthy.

In Windhoek we were kept very busy with studies, either with people at the campsite or with brethren from the two different congregations – one in town and one in a squatter camp. I would drop Linda at the apartment of one of the women for studies and then I would go, usually to Naftali’s house, to study with the men. At all these 3-4 hour studies (both men’s and women’s), quite a few non-Christians were also present. Three young men would have obeyed the gospel except for the fact that I “dug” and found out that they first needed to repent of living in fornication.

On Sunday at the squatter camp I preached my lesson on sexual purity. An older married brother who is a supposed pillar in the congregation tried to seduce a woman visitor from a distant town that very afternoon. Witchcraft was also involved. This just goes to show the rife of the problem and how easy it is for brethren to deceive us. Fortunately the woman spoke to my wife after one of the women’s studies the next day and so I was able to confront the brother and encourage him to repent. I am not sure what will happen to this brother and the congregation as a result. The brethren who started this congregation did not ask about marriage before baptizing a score of people. A few years later when I and others who went there started insisting on sexual purity, most fell away. This man was one of the few who repented (supposedly) and married the woman he was just living with. The last time I was there, he was my translator when I rebuked another brother who had pornographic pictures in his shack. This brother subsequently stopped attending. It has been an uphill battle to salvage anything from this rotten foundation – a battle I am afraid we are losing.

**FUTURE WORK:** On a more positive note, there are Christians in Namibia who do appear to be striving to be the kind of people Christ wants them to be. In all three cities brethren assured me they will distribute pamphlets and invite non-Christians to attend meetings when Gerry Sandusky will be with us, Lord-willing, in May. In Windhoek we have rented a venue in an area that has a much more self-disciplined population than in the squatter camp. Brethren we appreciate your prayers for our continued health and for God’s help as we labor for Him. May you be blessed!

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**Namib Desert**



**Kalahari Desert**



**Our new grandchild**



**Downtown Windhoek**