

# NYLSTROOM NEWS – JUNE 2008

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## ORANGE FREE STATE

During May we spent two days at Brandfort, teaching separate classes for men and women in the mornings and afternoons. There were a number of older teen visitors, and one of the visiting women brought her husband the second day. Therefore I spent quite a bit of time on first principles.

Then we went to Kroonstad for 1 ½ days. Brother Joseph Mokoena wanted me to meet Deon, an Afrikaans brother of an institutional background that he had bumped into one day. Deon has evidently been traveling around SA on a bicycle, trying to interest people in the gospel, depending on good-hearted strangers to provide his daily needs. Deon was out of town, but I did meet with a middle-aged Afrikaans man and his wife who had recently been converted by Deon. Deon came into their fast-food shop and got to talking to the wife about baptism. These people have taken Deon into their home and have set aside a room above their shop for worship. They are the only white Christians in Kroonstad. I have since had several email conversations and one phone conversation with Deon.

While at Kroonstad, on the Sunday morning, I preached and taught a Bible study on marriage. In the afternoon we had a study with a young couple (non-Christians) who have 3 small children. I also had a very interesting study with a medical doctor who believes God talks directly to him. Joseph calls him “the sick doctor.” Although he was very antagonistic at first, he calmed down when he saw I was using God’s written word only. I do not think he really realized before how authoritative God’s Word is. A Seventh Day Adventist preacher who attended the morning service came for a study in the evening. He was pleasantly surprised that I had used the Old Testament during my lessons as he had heard that the church of Christ does not believe in the Old Testament. He agreed with many errors of Seventh-Day Adventism that I point out, but still has a problem with the Sabbath. I hope the brethren at Kroonstad will be able to further study with these people and that their hearts will be open to the truth.

## NAMIBIA

The Donkerhoek brethren were just getting ready to begin worshipping in a school when we were last with them, so I thought it would be good to return fairly soon to encourage them in personal work to take advantage of this new opportunity. Linda spent some days retyping the six-lesson Know Your Bible course by Gene Tope, changing the Scripture quotations from KJV to NKJV, and adding a few graphics. We have found this course to be the most effective of those we have tried here in Africa. We took 500 English and 100 Afrikaans copies for them to distribute to friends and people who live in the neighborhood near the school. Leon phoned this week to tell me that they already have studies with two families, using the correspondence course.

During our three-week trip, I taught in the mornings at the hill. A new man, Andreas, a relative of Pius, attended most days. He has a fair grasp of English and an ability to understand what he reads from the Bible. By the end I felt he had a good grasp of what Christianity is about – but he is just living with a woman. To his credit, he has had a long-term relationship with her, despite the fact that their eldest son is mentally retarded. So perhaps there is a good heart there that will be willing to repent.

A few afternoons Linda or I had studies with different brethren. Most evenings Linda and I had classes with the Donkerhoek brethren. I started off with three lessons on leadership for the men, and then a few lessons on Matthew 24. The subject was new to them and they really enjoyed it and appreciated their new understanding. The first Sunday we were there, a spokesman from the Wahaneda Park congregation (associated with WBS) came and pleaded with the Donkerhoek brethren for unity. So the brethren and I spent a few nights studying how to achieve unity, and I helped the brethren draw up a letter that we hope will promote a better understanding as to the things that are dividing them, both doctrinally and morally.

The last Sunday we were there, brother Sheya made some comments before the Lord’s Supper that I found very interesting. In their culture (Owambo), if a man dies intestate, his brother comes and takes everything, including the children, and the wife goes back empty-handed to her parents. The children are then treated as slaves and forced to herd cattle instead of receiving an education. This illustrates the importance of a testament!

Physically speaking, this trip was quite stressful. The owners of the campground where we stayed moved out a few days after we arrived, and the new renters made us feel unwelcome (although they got half the money that we paid). Over the months we had built up quite a good relationship with the owners, so much so that they lent us one of their cars, free of charge, when I had an accident – a taxi driver hit me. Fortunately there were no injuries, but our car was not drive-able. Our insurance was extremely helpful however, and authorized for us to get the car fixed well enough to drive home where the rest of the repairs can be sorted out. During that same week, I was struggling with a stomach bug that I picked up on the hill, and Linda was struggling with flu. We are just thankful for the way God provided our needs so that His work could continue, pretty much unhindered. Even when we got home, our problems were not at an end. I had a bad fall when the ladder I was on collapsed, and I broke my left wrist. We pray that it will heal completely. I will have to keep the cast on at least 6 weeks.

## ZIMBABWE

Things are going from bad to worse politically and economically. One encouraging thing is that the brethren we work with were able to get their drought assistance. This is especially fortunate because Mugabe has halted the work of most NGOs. One-third of the population is fed by NGOs. One-tenth of the population is AIDS orphans under the age of 5. Mugabe says he will go to war if he is not elected president on June 27th, but it seems he has already gone to war to frighten the population into voting for him. Please pray that God will spare Zimbabwe for the sake of His children.

Your fellow-worker in Christ,

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