

NYLSTROOM NEWS

June 2007

For some weeks now we have been corresponding with a young college student and part-time preacher from Texas, Brady Cook. We picked him up from the airport on Saturday May 7th. I took pity on his jet lag and preached Sunday morning, but Brady preached Sunday night, and Monday morning we were off to Zimbabwe for two weeks. On Tuesday we started our normal teaching schedule of 9-12, 2-5, and an evening service. Brady was a bit daunted when he heard the schedule, but soon got into it and did a great job. We took turns teaching and preaching at five villages. Due mainly to the efforts of previous teaching by the local brethren, five obeyed the gospel. At each congregation I spoke about drought relief and the need for truthfulness and the need for members to be faithful. I also spoke about the destructiveness of deceit, using the story of Namaan and Gehazi.

We have had several young men, and even a few young women, come to work with us for short periods over the years. Some are already experienced in teaching and preaching and some or not. For most, it will be the only opportunity they have to experience this kind of work, especially if they do not become full-time preachers. However, for each of them, we believe it is a valuable life-changing experience that strengthens them spiritually, helps them to be more aware of the needs of others, and gives them a much better understanding of foreign work. Even those who do not preach, will hopefully one day be the future teachers and elders of the Lord's church. We want to thank the parents, congregations and supporters of these young people for encouraging them and helping them to be here. We have really enjoyed Brady's visit and look forward to having Jared Akins (a young man from TX) and Ramona Freeman (an old friend of Linda's) with us next month.

Below are Jared, Enoch, and I. Enoch is a 77-year-old knowledgeable, energetic preacher at Ghokho.

Zimbabwe is peaceful (if you are not involved in politics), but the lives of most of its citizens are pitiful. Inflation is running about 4000%. We bought petrol for Z\$42 000 per litre (US\$6.32/gallon) one day and three days later it was Z\$60 000. The currency had also devalued, but of course our currency had been exchanged a few days previously at the old rate, so the petrol cost us US\$9.40/gallon! You can imagine how people are struggling to live since local salaries cannot keep pace with inflation. In most congregations, the money that is collected on the first day of the week is counted and then immediately distributed to buy grape juice or to the poor among them. To keep it even for one week would be a waste.

There are several good things to report about the drought relief. One is that an economically viable way has been found for Zimbabwe brethren to get money from the USA. Thus the relief that is sent via men like Foy Short can go much further. Another good thing to report is that we personally were able to collect some letters or be in personal communication with men from 19 congregations in the area southwest of Gwanda and convey their needs to churches in the USA who have committed themselves to help these brethren. There are 520 needy among those churches, and we were able to supply them each with 10 kg (22 pounds) per month of maize meal for June and July. The amount of money needed to buy the maize meal coincides with the amount that the South African Exchange Control allows Linda and I to carry in to Zimbabwe. We actually have had more brethren commit themselves to helping needy saints than we have ability to use, so we will be writing to these brethren individually to let them know about this. However, if any individual still wishes to help, please email Foy Short at hshort0925@bellsouth.net. Foy is striving to see that the needs of about 2000 needy saints are met. Although he has enough at present, he will soon be needing more. During the past month, we have been in contact with Foy and other messengers who are working to get relief to the churches, and I am happy to say that in the areas where we generally travel (southern and western Zimbabwe), all of the needy brethren received assistance this past month. Our great God has truly opened a door for our suffering brethren.

Below: Sunday morning worship at Nwhali, one of the congregations where 2/3 of the members receive drought relief.

We got back from Zimbabwe on Sunday afternoon, and about 30 minutes before our evening service was to begin, one of our new neighbours came to see me about something. I casually invited him and his wife to services. It is very rare for a person, especially an Afrikaans person, to actually agree to come, and even more rare when they actually follow through! Brady's lesson was just right for first-time visitors. So we were very excited to see them and pray their hearts will be open to the Lord.

During the past few months different individuals have sent more than enough money for these trips to Zimbabwe and food for the meetings as well as money to make portable baptisteries and money for simple over-the-counter medications, Bibles and songbooks for needy brethren. Since January, over \$2000 has been deposited anonymously into our account. This month our photocopier, which I bought second-hand about ten years ago, finally broke down for the last time – there are no more parts to fix it. So we used the \$2000 to replace it. For those we know of, we are sending a financial report. For those we don't know of, we just want you to know that we appreciate your help very much.

In about a week we (and Brady) are due to go to Zimbabwe again, this time to the northwestern province of Binga and will be working with Peter Mudenda. We are really looking forward to that trip, especially as we have so much enjoyed our work together with Peter in the past. Brethren please pray for us to have a good and safe work.

Your fellow servant in Christ, Les Maydell

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Jared/Enoch/Les



Sun AM worship at Nwhali