

OUR WORK FOR THE LORD IN SOUTHERN AFRICA

September 2009

FOOD

We have just spent two weeks in Zimbabwe, mainly in the area (Gwanda South) that experienced virtually total crop failure and continued to need drought relief. Thankfully our camper did not give us any trouble. We held two-day meetings at three central locations and saw brethren from 16 of the 19 congregations in that area. We also taught at two other places near Bulawayo. The brethren are very happy with the way the aid is being distributed. We received many expressions of appreciation for the help you have sent. Several told us that they pray for you when they sit down to eat and give thanks for their food. Many of you have already sent messages of thanksgiving on the slips. I will put some of the brethren's letters below.

Some things in Zimbabwe have improved. The shops in the major towns and cities are well stocked and prices have come down considerably, though that is not much help to the average person who receives about \$100 per month. For those of you sending parcels, please do not be tempted to send money instead now that food is available in the shops. This has happened at two congregations, and I am sorry to say that it has caused much trouble.

As I mentioned in the last newsletter, most of the other 78 congregations will be needing drought relief from the first of October, which means we need the money by the fifteenth of September. We really sincerely thank those of you who have already responded to this need. Right now we estimate that we still need \$4500 for food for October. Brethren in Zimbabwe know that there is a world-wide recession, and that many brethren in the USA are also suffering. For that reason, those who reaped something, shared with those in their congregations who did not reap – so that most of the congregations could go for three months without requesting aid.

Below is Lillian, wife of Newman Gumpo, standing next to some of the bags of maize that brethren from the Kensington congregation donated to help others who were needy.

SEED

The brethren also were extremely grateful for the seeds that you enabled them to receive last year. That seed is what enabled the brethren to go these three months without aid. Even the brethren who did not reap felt that the seeds gave them much-needed hope. The brethren in Gwanda South are so grateful for the seeds that they said they would rather suffer hunger for a month and use the maize meal money to buy seed, than to go without seed for the up-coming season. However, Gumpo felt that perhaps some of the brethren would be so hungry that they would eat the seeds – and that would be a terrible waste since maize seed costs \$2200 per ton – over five times the amount that maize meal costs. So I have decided to tell you of the need and just see how much money comes in – then, together with Bigboy and Gumpo, decide what to do. Last year I acted on the advice of the man at SeedCo and we gave the brethren half O.P.V. (open pollinated variety) and half a special drought-resistant hybrid. For that reason, they cannot use part of their harvest as seed to plant again this year. The brethren say that they have not noticed any difference in yield between the two varieties (most did not realize they received two varieties), and so this year, if we can, we plan to buy all O.P.V. so that the brethren can save part of their crop so that hopefully we will not need to buy seed next year, or at least not nearly as much. When we were in Zimbabwe, we managed to go into Bulawayo and source the open-pollinated variety specifically for the area where the brethren live as well as sorghum seed especially for those in low-rainfall areas such as Gwanda South, where the brethren have asked for half maize seed and half sorghum seed. (Last year I could not find sorghum seed.) If I buy seed, I need to buy it this month before the "rush." Last year we sent 11 tonnes of seed to the 78 congregations where I am a messenger, plus 1 tonne to Beit Bridge, 2 tonnes to Matabeleland North, and 2 tonnes to Binga. The brethren really need more seed than this, and so I have asked Mountbatten Brewer, who is a messenger for Matabeleland North, and Johnny Scholtz, who is a messenger for the Beit Bridge area, to try to ask brethren who send aid to them if they can also help with seed. The brethren in the 78 congregations where I am a messenger (2800 Christians) need approximately 14 tonnes of seed: 1.58 tonne sorghum at \$1700 per tonne and 12.425 tonnes maize at \$2200 per tonne = \$2686 + \$27,335 = \$30,021. That is just for the seed. The transport cost will be an estimated further \$2500. Total needed for seed: approx. \$32,500.

SPIRITUAL FOOD

For some years I have been drawn especially to the book of Mark. On this trip to Zimbabwe, both Linda and I had lessons using Scriptures as much as possible from the book of Mark. We started by teaching a lesson about Christ our King. We also taught about the Kingdom of God, focusing on the laws of the kingdom, particularly the marriage law, because of the fornication that is so prevalent in their culture. Then I also taught on the people of the kingdom, focusing on being a servant. The brethren seemed to get more from these lessons than when we "jump around" from book to book. There were four baptisms and one man was restored. Bigboy has asked me to come back in October to central points in Filabusi and Mberengwe, spending three days at each place, and concentrate on teaching preachers the book of Mark. He has asked Linda to teach the women.

Next to the pump where we got the water for baptizing is this garden. Each of the villagers has a small garden like this along the edge of the dried up river bed where they can dig for water. This is how the brethren supplement the maize meal that you send. If you look at the baptism picture, you will see part of another garden in the background.

DARLINGTON

Linda and I have both had Darlington on our minds a lot, and while we were in Zimbabwe, I decided to go to see him as soon as possible after our return. When we returned yesterday, we heard from Robert Buchanan that Darlington will appear before the judge tomorrow afternoon. Therefore, we plan to leave early tomorrow morning so that we can hopefully be present for that. There will not be time before we leave for me to give a detailed financial report regarding drought relief, but I want to go ahead and send this letter anyway because I needed to let you know about the seed.

REJOICE WITH US!

Linda's brother who has been away from the Lord for many years was restored last Sunday. This is an answer to many prayers!

THANKS

We really have no words to express our thanks – we will let the brethren receiving the aid speak for themselves. If you wish to contribute for food or for seed, please make a check out to me (J.L. Maydell) and send it to our daughter's address: Mrs Melody Harbig, 9876 Morris Glen Way, Temple Terrace, FL 33637.

Your fellow-servant in Christ,
Les Maydell

LETTERS FROM BRETHREN

Dear Brethren!

I do hope you are doing well. This side we are all doing well.

Brethren we will to thank you for the good work which you are doing to us. May the Lord give you more blessing. The maize seeds which you sent to us, some time, did well. Brethren, for now we have better produce. The food which we are having can take us two-three months starting from May. So brethren help us again soon after two months.

To sum up, Mbembesi Church of Christ has 37 members for now. We also thank Bigboy Dube for the work he is doing among us.

Yours in Christ, Bongani Moyo (Mbembesi preacher)

Brother Les Maydell

God is great, with God everything is possible. We never thought we could overcome a terrible situation that we experienced. But through God's grace upon us we survived.

We are blessed with brethren who are very kind and possessed with great love. They supported us with maize seeds and mealie-meal every month up to the time of harvest. Let brotherly love continue, each member receiving 10kg mealie-meal.

Because of the maize seed given to us, we are blessed with better harvests that could take us up to September. But we have some brethren who failed to reap.

We are a congregation of 56 members. Therefore we have 23 members who need food right now. Among them we have 8 widows and orphans, in fact child-headed families. Some of them their crops were short of manure, some have no cattle to yoke and plough. Others tried to dig with hoes. These reasons gave them poor results. At the same time we have widows and orphans who lack clothing. We have tried to help some of them with old clothes.

We won't forget the services of the servants of Christ, Les Maydell and his family, N. Gumbo and his family, and Bigboy and his family. Also brother Neward did a lot during the time of mealie-meal delivery. May God bless all of you.

Gwabamtenga Church of Christ. Allen Dewa.

Brother L Maydell:

On behalf of the saints at Magwegwe Church of Christ I would like to thank you for the timely deliveries of food aid (mealie meal and seeds) and the tireless love you have shown to us during our times of hardship and happiness.

May the Lord Almighty bless you, your family and all the saints who have contributed towards our food aid that we have been receiving.

As a church comprising of widows, pensioners and the unemployed dwelling in urban setup, we humbly ask the saints to continue helping us as the little harvest we got will only last us up to the end of August 2009.

We thank you in advance for the continued anticipated help from the saints. (Colossians 1:7-12...as a faithful servant of Christ we pray for you always.)

Yours in Christ,
P.P. Luxon, Magwegwe Church of Christ.

One of the elders of the Magwegwe congregation and his wife standing next to the church building (see photo). Notice that the brethren used every inch of space to try to grow food – inside the property and even on the road verge.

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