

OUR WORK FOR THE LORD IN SOUTHERN AFRICA -- APRIL 2010

TRIP TO ZIMBABWE

On Sunday, 12 April, after morning worship, we left for Zimbabwe. We picked up our Venda translator, Samson Musandiwa, slept at Johnny Scholtz's farm, and arrived at the border early Monday morning.

Elias Chikozho was waiting for us as we had previously arranged. He had come straight from the hospital where his toddler son was being treated for a broken arm. We went by the hospital to make sure everything was OK and arrived at Penemene at lunch time. Then we had to wait patiently for brethren from seven congregations to arrive. There were 10 men and about 60 women in attendance, many having



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walked several kilometers. We had a late afternoon class and then in the evening I presented the first Jules Miller filmstrip (The Patriarchal Age), using a 12V filmstrip projector I once bought. Most had never seen anything like it, and the questions indicated that they profited much by it. Their general Bible knowledge, especially about the O.T., is very minimal. A lot of people from the community also attended. The next evening even more came and I presented The Mosaic Age. We had classes the whole of Tuesday. The morning was spent publicly discussing with the men how two former preachers among them (who were present) should and could repent, one of fornication and one of defrauding the brethren. Both had hearts of repentance, and, together with everyone, plans were made to help them carry out the fruits of repentance. Just before lunch, we all came together, having heard that there was a woman desiring to be baptized. Samson preached on baptism and two responded to the gospel. In the afternoon I taught 2 Timothy 1. Linda spent both morning and afternoon teaching the women how to teach their children.

On Wednesday morning we drove 20-30 km to Joko, accompanied by a few of the men who wanted more teaching. When we arrived at Joko Primary School, where our meeting was to take place, we found quite a few cars and people waiting for the speakers of the ruling party to arrive and hold a political meeting. Their meeting ran about 5 hours late, so again our start was delayed until about 3 pm. (Lots of patience is required to live and work in Africa.) Political tension between the ruling party and the opposition is severe, and it says a lot for the brethren that they are willing to work and worship together despite their differences. At Joko (about 10 men from 5 congregations present) I started with Psalm 1 and tried to get them to see how outlining aids in understanding God's message. Not one of them, even the seventh grade teacher (a visitor), had ever done such a thing, and they were awestruck at how much it helped them to understand what they read. The next morning I showed them how outlining is a first step in sermon preparation. They tend to preach by stringing together a lot of verses, making points at random. I again showed the filmstrips both evenings, and afterward the brethren sang for a couple of hours. On Thursday afternoon I taught a combined class on marriage because of questions that had arisen in Linda's class. There is a lot of confusion about marriage in Africa because the central government has replaced the local chief as the governing authority in the realm of marriage, and most people have either been ignorant of or

have resisted this change. One man encouraged the other men to “sign” at the court; otherwise if a man dies, his family will come and strip the “wife” of all the possessions they worked together to obtain, and she will be left destitute. The men all agreed that this is common practice, that they know that the government wants them to sign, and that fighting against the government is fighting against God. One influential brother told me that he is going to go “sign” as he needs to be a good example to the other brethren. With time and lots of teaching I hope the confusion will be overcome.



Some of the men at Joko. This farm was taken away from its owner by force and is now a school.



One man who has been a good example in this matter is Bigboy. He was convicted of his need to sign some years ago, even though he did not have enough money for the traditional African wedding lasting 2 days. After saving for years, Bigboy finally managed the traditional wedding. Linda and I, together with hundreds of others, including the local chief and councilman, attended the second day of Bigboy’s wedding last Saturday. This is a very important event in African culture, and we were happy to see so many brethren full of joy for Bigboy’s sake – a bright day in a bleak year (crop-wise). To the left is 74-year-old Newman Gumpo and his wife Lillian – all dressed up for the wedding. Newman delivers about 11 MT of maize meal each month to over 20 congregations.

We got up early on Sunday morning in order to be at Mtetengwe (near the border) by 8 so we could finish worshipping and travel home by the time of evening services. These brethren are begging for more visits. They are isolated in distance from the other congregations in the Beit Bridge area and so are unable to walk to the meetings that are held in central locations. I can see they have gone backwards since our last visit about 3 years ago. There is just so much work needing to be done. *We sincerely thank the individuals who supply the extra money needed for the trip expenses, including gasoline and food for the brethren who come to the meetings.*

PLANNED TRIP TO NAMIBIA

We had originally intended to spend a full two weeks in Zimbabwe, but because we had to bring our Namibia trip forward by a week, we decided to confine our work this trip to one week in the Beit Bridge area. Lord willing, we leave for Namibia on May 4th, our 34th wedding anniversary.

DROUGHT REPORT -- Approximately \$7000 urgently needed.

Good news is that the price of maize meal has decreased by \$25 per metric tonne, saving us over \$800.



Because of recent rain, a woman at Mtetengwe can enjoy wild greens.

Even better is that the price dropped between the time we paid last time and the time the messengers picked it up, which means we also saved \$800 in March. I have applied that gain towards April's costs (see below).

Rain *has* fallen again in parts of Zimbabwe, but if it has done any good at all, it is only to very few brethren since most crops had already died. By June we should know if any brethren reaped enough to sustain a congregation for even one month.

By Monday we should be sending the needed funds to National Foods Zimbabwe so that Bigboy and Gumpo can begin delivering maize meal, but currently we are close to \$7000 short. Brethren, we are so encouraged by the fact that several individuals are giving \$25, \$50, \$100 and more each month. Some congregations are also giving a few hundred dollars each month. We truly thank them and pray that more will follow their example.

With gratitude,
Les Maydell

Money needed for April:

Diesel and maintenance, Bigboy = \$1277.50.

Petrol and maintenance, Gumpo = \$1240.

11.63 MT maize meal@\$400/MT = \$4652.

21.68 MT maize meal@\$401/MT = \$8694.

Less money not used in March due to price change: \$823.

Total needed: \$15,040.50.

Money reported last time as being set aside for April: \$4263.

Money received since that time: \$50 – LG,PA; \$25 – Anon.MN; \$200 – Anon.AL; \$50 – G family, AL; \$2000 – Bagdad Church of Christ, FL; \$200 – H family, AR; \$200 + \$125 – Kemper Heights church of Christ, TN; \$400 – N Little Rock church of Christ, AR; \$200 – A family, AL; \$300 – J family, TN; \$100 – H family, MS.

Total: \$3850.

Total received: \$8113.

Shortfall: \$6927.50.