

Our Work for the Lord in Southern Africa – July 2010

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OUR TRIP TO THE USA

We are very excited about our up-coming trip to the USA, especially to see our children and grandchildren. We also hope to visit some of the congregations who help us in our work. Below is an itinerary of where we hope to be each week. If any congregations in those areas would like to see us, please contact me. At this time we especially want to express our thanks to the family who helps us with \$200/month so that we can afford the trip. It does not cover all our costs (some of you have asked about that), but it does make the trip affordable for us.

August 4-11: In the Houston TX area with Joseph

August 12-17: Camping in the Rockies with Joseph

August 18- 26: St. Louis MO area with Linda's mother

August 27 – Sept 2: Tampa FL with Melody, Jeremy, Indi and Mela

Sept 3 – 9: Knoxville TN with Joy, Jared, Nathan and Abigail

Sept 10 – 22: Family reunion + Birmingham AL area with Gloria, Sam, Titus, Levi & Noah

Our phone number in the USA will be 813 484 9937. Failing that, you can contact us via our daughter Melody Harbig: 813 368 1556.

OUR TRIP TO ZIMBABWE

I am dictating this newsletter to Linda as we travel down the road from Zimbabwe to our home. We have just spent over 2 weeks in Zimbabwe, teaching at 7 different congregations. Some of the pictures we have taken will be in this report, and others I plan to put into a presentation to give while we are in the USA.

The first place we visited was Tombo where Paddy Kendall-Ball and I, along with other Zimbabwean brethren shared the preaching (combined audience) and teaching (separate classes) of men, women and children. The meeting was from Friday afternoon through Sunday morning, July 2-4. On the evening of the 4th I preached at the Hillside congregation in Bulawayo, and on Monday we collected drought receipts from Newman Gumpo. The rest of our time we were together with Bigboy Dube in 3 provinces south of Bulawayo, all of which have suffered terribly due to the drought. With rare exception, no one reaped anything from their fields – maize or sorghum or ground nuts. There is grazing in some areas, but not in Gwanda South. It is very sad to see the denuded ground. The winter has been unusually cold, which the old people say means a good rainy season next year. We certainly hope and pray this is so. We did not visit the Gweru area where there are 6 congregations and 227 Christians, but we received word from Enoch Ncube that only 25 bags of maize meal are needed for the one congregation. All the other congregations have enough food until the end of the year. This is good news indeed, and we thank the brethren for their honesty. (Picture: Prince Moyo shows me the maize silo of a Christian – empty except for a few melons.)



Mangena, who walks 20 miles twice a week to evangelize in this village, baptized her. At Ngoma, a sister in

We spent two days each at Mabantu, Zenda, Colleen Bawn, Ngoma and Nwhali congregations. At each venue, Christians walked 5-20 miles from an average of 5 other congregations in order to attend. Food must be cooked for all these people (usually about 100 adults), and we (and the brethren) want to thank a sister in Arkansas and a brother in FL for the funds that we use to make these trips and provide the food. Altogether 15-20 were baptized due to the hard work done by the Zimbabwean brethren previous to the meetings. Some brethren are really on fire to evangelize, and some congregations are growing by leaps and bounds. Although some "converts" may be coming because of drought relief, we have also heard many good reports of converts who have really changed their lives. I want to mention two highlights of these meetings: At Mabantu, a 92-year-old woman, still having a sharp mind, was brought to the meeting in a wheel barrow. On a cold, windy day, the sisters lifted her in and out of the "baptizing tent" while brother

her 60's, who was walking 10 miles each way to attend worship, decided to go alone, house to house, in her own village, teaching the gospel. When about a dozen people were willing to repent, she called the 76-year-old preacher at Ngoma to come baptize them. Old brother Nyati is now cycling the 20 miles each week to preach at this new congregation at Tshokotshoko, now made up of 5 men and 23 women. If Bigboy gets the funds he is requesting (\$200 for petrol and food for the meeting), he plans to take some of the members from the Gwanda congregation to Tshokotshoko for a weekend meeting, teaching them songs (they sing through the night), and strengthening them in the word of God. (Picture: Some of the new converts at Tshokotshoko who walked 15 kms to the meeting at Ngoma.)



About a year ago I mentioned that I was preaching about the trouble Christians were generally having regarding “marrying” according to tradition only, and not marrying according to the law of Zimbabwe. I have continued to preach about this just about everywhere I visit. On this trip I was encouraged to hear of several brethren who have gone to the considerable effort it takes to marry according to the laws of Zimbabwe (Romans 13:1-2), yet as much as possible, be at peace with their in-laws (Romans 12:18). These men are paving the way for others to follow their good examples, and they are especially helping their own children to do the same. I was especially encouraged to hear that some of the Zimbabwean preachers are also addressing the issue in a good way. Because of these things, I have hope that in time to come, this serious problem among the brethren will largely be a thing of the past. The fact that the brethren do not get angry or argue against the truth when confronted shows their basic honesty of heart and humility that makes it so easy to love them.

GRATITUDE

Brethren, we continue to be overwhelmed by the good hearts that are willing to share, even when times are difficult. I know you will be blessed: *He who has pity on the poor lends to the Lord, and He will pay back what he has given.* – *Prov. 19:17.* We have a special place in our hearts for those who are not discouraged from giving, even though they are only able to give what seems to be a small amount. It is many of you giving small amounts from big hearts that have made this work possible.

Your response has helped us in a special way. For the past several months, I have been letting you know towards the end of the month if we are short, and you then respond. The problem is that when we travel during the month, the newsletter may come too late for you to respond before the end of the month. That is what happened in the month of June. Now that you have so abundantly given, the need for July has been met, but I am going to tell you NOW that there is a \$8590 shortfall that we need before the middle of August. If we can keep one half-month ahead like this, it will help to ensure that the brethren always get food.

Brethren, I personally am very grateful for the hard work of the brethren involved in distributing the drought relief. Besides Bigboy and Gumpo there are other men on the ground – Newart, Professor and others - who are sacrificing so that the maize meal can be distributed to the needy, sometimes using their own cars or donkey carts, and helping with loading and off-loading. All of these men labour under many difficulties. Sometimes suppliers do not come through and have to be pushed and pleaded with. Sometimes suppliers want 20 tonnes of maize meal cleared from their warehouse “yesterday”. Many times Bigboy and Gumpo break down on the roads, and have to unload literally a ton of weight in order to get the truck out of the mud or jack it up to change a tyre, etc. Gumpo has had a particularly bad time lately with his truck, and so it is also with a special gratitude that we would like to thank the brethren at the Westpoint congregation in New York for supplying \$10,000 whereby Gumpo can hopefully obtain a



good used “2-tonne lorry” to be used for distributing drought relief. His one-ton pick-up was simply unable to carry the strain. (Picture: The roads are so bad – at this place I had to get out and re-arrange the stones, just to be able to get out of the hole without damaging the underside of the camper.)

We rejoice to be used by the Lord to work in His vineyard, but it could not be done without your love, prayers and giving spirit. With gratitude to you and the Lord, Les Maydell.

DROUGHT REPORT

We have received almost all of the drought relief slips for December 2009 – May 2010 and hope to post them within the next week. Unfortunately a few are missing – probably they are irretrievably lost. However, considering the journey each slip has to travel to get to us, we think the brethren have done a wonderful job with the slips.

There has been an on-going hassle with the supplier of maize meal in Gwanda since December. After many nagging phone calls from my side and personal visits by Bigboy, 15 of the 20 tonnes was delivered. Because of the trouble, we decided to pay a bit extra, and began receiving maize meal from National Foods in Bulawayo in January. There has been no trouble with National Foods so far. Finally, after a personal visit to the Gwanda supplier by both myself and Bigboy, he released another 2 tonnes to Bigboy last Saturday. We will keep nagging, and hopefully get the rest soon. I am especially glad for the 2 tonnes because the brethren in Gwanda South are suffering more than the other brethren, and since the drought relief was short this month, they will at least be partially supplemented this month with the maize meal they never got in December. The brethren who supplied maize meal for Gwanda South in December and will not yet receive slips are: \$400 - Church of Christ, N Little Rock, AR; \$500 - H family, TN; \$200 - Kemper Heights Church of Christ, TN; \$200 - Anon., AL; \$100 – M, TX; \$50 - W family, AL; \$200 – J family, TX; \$500 – Riverview Church of Christ, FL; \$400 - New Hope Church of Christ, AL, \$56 – A, TN; \$100 – T family, AL.

Here are some of the letters from Gwanda South: Dendele, April 2010: “*Thank you very much for remembering us and sending us gifts. The hunger is great, also in the fields we reaped nothing. Also the birds were too many. We want to say that we received gifts from you, but we are needy. We reaped nothing. Thank you. May the Lord be with you.*” Matshutshutha, March 2010: “*Brethren, your love is very great. It is God who has united us. You remember us. You assist us through this difficult time. May God bless you and add more to you.*” Ngoma, May 2010: “*We are thanking the power of the Lord. He gives His people power to give assistance to the brethren who are suffering. The hunger is great. May the Lord give them life. May the Lord add to them many days of living because they are helping the dying. They are repeatedly lifting up the needy. May the Lord carry them forever and ever. Thank you.*”

Actual cost for June: (Only half of the maize meal was sent.)

Diesel and Maintenance, Bigboy = \$617 + \$75 = \$692 Petrol and maintenance, Gumpo = \$539 + \$200 = \$739
6.21 MT maize meal @ \$390/MT = \$2421.90. 10.84 MT maize meal @ \$401/MT = \$4346.84. Bank fees \$165
Total used for June: \$8,365.

Money received for June: Money reported on in the last newsletter: \$6149

Money received after the newsletter was sent: H family, TN \$400; Mrs W, AL \$150; M family, FL \$100; Riverview, FL \$500; Extra from Church of Christ, Casey IL \$1000; T, South Africa \$13; B, South Africa \$53.
Total: \$8365

Estimated cost for July:

10.62 MT maize meal @\$390/MT = \$4141.80 23.3 MT maize meal @ \$401/MT = \$9343.30 Total: \$13,485.10
Diesel, Bigboy \$1178. Petrol, Gumpo \$975. Maintenance, including insurance, license renewal & excise duty: \$920.
Off-loading charges by National Foods, Gwanda depot, Jan-July = \$279. Bank fees: \$175
Total: \$17,012

Money received for July:

\$700 – unknown deposit; \$1000 – Church of Christ, Casey IL; \$50 – H family, FL; \$100 – H family, FL; \$500 – S family, SC; \$100 – G family, NC; \$4000 – A family, IN; \$100 – G family, AL; \$370 – A family, TN; \$100 – H family, MS; \$100 – H family, KY; \$20 – D, KY; \$500 – D family, TX; \$100 – V family, IN; \$100 – S, AL; \$5000 – Hwy 29 Church of Christ, NC; \$1000 – M family, TN; \$125 – Kemper Heights Church of Christ, TN; \$51 – M, FL; \$50 – W family, TX; \$200 – C family, AR; \$10 – N, FL; \$100 – Anon, KY; \$2000 – H family, TN; \$25 – Anon, GA; \$110 – members of Addison County Church of Christ, VT; \$100 – J family, TX; \$400 – A family, AL;
Total: \$17,011.

Estimated cost for August:

10.62 MT maize meal @\$390/MT = \$4141.80
23.3 MT maize meal @ \$390/MT = \$9343.30
Diesel, Bigboy \$1178. Petrol, Gumpo \$975. Maintenance \$800. Off-loading charges by National Foods, Gwanda depot, \$47.
Bank fees: \$175
Total: \$16,660.

Money received for August:

\$60 – S, FL; \$100 – B family, KY; \$200 – Anon, AL; \$100 – S, KY; \$50 – J, KY; \$75 – G, PN; \$10 cash - unknown; \$50 – B, NM; \$100 – M family, TN; \$100 – G, KY; \$300 – J family, TN; \$1000 – Westlake Church of Christ, MO; \$500 – G family, TN; \$5000 – Westvue Church of Christ, Murfreesboro TN; \$125 – C, MO; \$50 – C, MO; \$50 – H family, FL; \$150 – L family, KY; \$50 – D, TN.
Total received: \$8070

Shortfall: Approximately \$8590.