



## Our Work for the Lord in Southern Africa -- March 2016

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### DURBAN

We are greatly blessed to be given opportunities to teach and preach God's word. The Tuesday evening class at Phoenix on the minor prophets is going along nicely. Quite a few brethren are amazed because they have never studied it before, so they are appreciative of the class and encouraged by the practical lessons. I am still teaching the book of Titus at Westville on Wednesday evenings. While Paddy was away, the congregation at Unit 9 asked me to teach them on Thursday evenings (Paddy was teaching them on Mondays), so I did a series on how we can know the Bible is the word of God. When Paddy returned, they decided to have two mid-week Bible studies so they could continue both Paddy's lessons and mine.

#### **In this newsletter:**

**Prayers still needed for drought in Southern Africa**

I am also blessed to be having two personal Bible studies with non-Christians. I now have a weekly study with the man at the bank that I mentioned last time as having completed Lesson 1 of the correspondence course. His name is Lefa, and he and his "wife" have just had their first child, a son. Lefa now has to decide if he is going to put his foot down concerning witchdoctors and ancestor worship surrounding the normal tribal rituals after the birth of a child, and he also has to decide if he is going to upset everyone in both families by marrying his "wife" according to the laws of the land of South Africa (since he can't afford the bride price). I believe these are the things that are keeping him from obeying the gospel. Otherwise it is so encouraging to study with such an enthusiastic student who really enjoys what he is learning and sees the value of it. The other study is with Simphiwe, a third-year university student, studying to be an English teacher, whose mother was converted sometime last year by Scott Tope and lives in a rural area several miles north of Durban. Simphiwe attends worship with us each week as well. (Lefa cannot attend because he works 7 days per week, 12 hours per day, but he says he is going to see if he can take some of his days off that are owing to him on a Sunday.) Simphiwe is a helpful and polite young man who wants to obey the gospel but needs a bit more teaching. So far we have only had two classes where I have answered his questions concerning who Jesus is. After today's class I told him that next time, Lord willing, we will talk about the gospel. A petrol attendant where I fill up has completed the first lesson of the correspondence course. When I gave him Lesson 2, his colleague asked to be given Lesson 1.

About 18 months ago I had several studies with a Hindu young man who was dating a Christian. The young man started attending worship, had several studies with his girlfriend's father and grandfather, and now we are rejoicing that he was finally baptized into Christ about a month ago. His parents, who had threatened to kick him out of the house, decided not to do that, and his sister is now attending worship with him as well. The grandfather who studied with him is actually our brother Thumba, whom I mentioned as being very ill with stage 4 lung cancer. He ended up with the experimental chemo that causes quite severe side effects, but he is no longer coughing nor struggling to breathe. He goes for a scan on the 18<sup>th</sup> to see how effective the treatment has been.

### ZIMBABWE

We have plans in the works for the first part of our May-July visit to Zimbabwe, and hope to finalize these soon. Sewell Hall's granddaughter Heather plans to spend some time with us in July, and we are looking forward to that.

Several brethren have asked me about the drought in Zimbabwe. There is an unusually severe drought in all of southern Africa that is continuing. It is too late to save summer crops, and too late to save many animals, but we ask you to pray for rain so that animals and people will be able to get the water they need to survive the dry season which is due to begin next month. Many major dams in South Africa have just about dried up. The Durban

municipality is beginning to install valves which restrict water flow to a trickle where house pipes connect to the main pipe. In other areas they have instituted "water shedding," which means that certain days of the week there is no water from 8 am until 6 pm.

Regarding drought relief, I really feel that I simply am not able to handle the drought relief as I did in the past. I am not able to visit the Zimbabwe brethren as often as I used to, I'm wonderfully busy in the work here in this area, and I am getting older. Should anyone wish to help needy brethren in the areas where I used to be a messenger, please contact Bigboy Dube directly: [bigboydube@yahoo.co.uk](mailto:bigboydube@yahoo.co.uk). There are actually several preachers in Zimbabwe who are requesting drought aid in the various areas. Many of them I do not know. However, I would just like to say a few things to you good-hearted brethren who want to help fellow-Christians who are struggling. Those of us who have never experienced the difficulties that these brethren are in have no idea of the pressure under which these preachers/messengers work. Therefore, in order to protect them and also to be a good steward of the income God has blessed me with, I consider it essential that whoever handles any money sent from me should supply the following information: Some kind of letter of acknowledgment from the brethren (plural) in the congregation/s who received the assistance (NOT the preacher/messenger who handled it), that they received such-and-such assistance from you. (Your name needs to be on that slip so that they know who the aid comes from – and to protect the messenger who delivered it in case he is ever accused of not handling the relief correctly.) There should be also included a receipt from the store where the food was bought. If there are any other expenses such as petrol or vehicle maintenance, then an accounting for that must also be given. A question that people often ask me is whether I still feel if aid should only come from individuals and not from the Lord's day collection. Although, after much teaching, many brethren have obeyed the laws of Zimbabwe regarding marriage, there are still many who remain in their "quasi-marriages" (fornication). Therefore, I still feel that relief should come from individuals. It is my fervent desire that every *faithful* brother or sister and their family who is truly *needy* should receive what is needed. It is also my fervent desire that these highly resourceful brethren learn to manage their situation in a way that they are not constantly needing assistance. A careful handling of relief that does not cause overdependence on others nor give any reason to doubt the messengers will also prevent those who give from being discouraged in their giving.

We cannot express enough how grateful we are for your fellowship with us in the Lord's work through your support and prayers, and we pray for God's blessings on your efforts to serve Him.

Your thankful brother in Christ, Les Maydell