



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

Les Maydell P O Box 39076 Queensburgh 4070 S. Africa Tel. (SA) +27 31 464 7227 cell:+27 83 287 3982  
Email: LMAYDELL@gmail.com

**THIRD TRIP TO ZIMBABWE -- Week 1: Beit Bridge / Masvingo area with Elias Chikozho:** We got up at 4:30 am and arrived at the border at 6:30 am on Sunday morning September 4<sup>th</sup> – and the queue of people was probably over 1 km long. We were plagued by “runners” offering to get us through the border quickly for just \$60, but fortunately because I am over 70, I am allowed to “jump” the queue and we made it through in about 2 hours. The first place we



went to was Mujiva. The brethren waited to have service until we arrived about 4:30 pm. Maphosa’s homestead was a real eye-opener. We drove through over 100 kms of typical Zimbabwe lack-of-rainfall and arrived at this place – a real “garden of Eden” – a most wonderful example of Zimbabwean resourcefulness. Instead of waiting for others to help, this brother acted to help himself and serve others. He dug a well by hand – much like Abraham in the OT. He dug 28 metres. He then sold 2 of his cattle and bought a solar panel and a submersible pump driven by solar power. He pumps the water into a small reservoir ideal for baptism and stocked with fish. Even in summer, I’ve never seen a garden as good as his. He had corn about 5 feet high, tomatoes staked higher than my head, and many other vegetables – in the middle of winter! I mentioned his example

to the brethren in numerous places after that: this is the type of thing Zimbabweans should do as much as possible. I have come across it in other places, even two other brethren in the Beit Bridge area. At Mujiva we had a lot of good time to teach and discuss. Two were baptized. The next place we went was to Erasmusi. I had about 8 men, one of whom had a lot of questions about Seventh Day Adventism. At the end of our two days there, he and his wife and three others were baptized. Our final stop for the week was at Tongwe, one of the first congregations in the area. Quite a few congregations were started from it. There were people from about 5 congregations, we had great attendance and 4 obeyed the gospel. (See picture.) The brethren at Tongwe had done a good job of making sure they always partook of the Lord’s Supper. They had sent to South Africa for Matzos and to Beit Bridge for grape juice. However, many if not most other congregations, no matter where I went, were seldom having the Lord’s Supper – only when someone (eg. a visiting preacher) brought them the emblems. Linda taught them how to make bread over an open fire and I admonished them about how they *timeously* sent to the nearest large city for everything else they needed, why could they not do so for the most important things of all? Some congregations lacked money, and that is when I asked them if there was *any* one of them who didn’t have cattle, goats or chickens. Not one. Who gave them those animals? Why could they not take turns selling at least a chicken? (A chicken will give them more than a month’s supply of grape juice.) At one place on the trip the men were astounded. They had never thought of it. At another place a preacher said, “Thank you for this lesson. I have been preaching many times about giving, but this is the first time the ladies have heard that they need to sell a chicken!” They were also amazed by 1 Timothy 5 – that they needed to help their families so that the church is not burdened.



**Week 2: Mberengwe/Filabusi area with Bigboy Dube:** I had not originally planned to visit these places, but when we were in Zimbabwe last time, the brethren asked that we add them to our schedule. The first place, Mbembesi, is a congregation we had never visited, although the brethren there had often attended meetings at nearby places where we had previously been. Here there was good attendance, and lots of preachers present from different congregations. Bigboy did a wonderful job of bringing the food and his tent beforehand so that teaching time would be



maximized. The ladies did an exceptional job of cleaning weeds and brush off the entire property and making a dung floor for the tent so that there would be no dust. At Silalatshani the ladies made a shaded structure for the men, but we outgrew it! At both of these places the attendance of women was negatively affected by a government travelling clinic treating people so that they would not develop Elephantiasis.

The last two days of the week we were at Mashoko, a place Linda and I did not remember, but the brethren say we were there in about 2003. This place is rather off the beaten track. It is seldom visited and the brethren in this area are too far away to walk to other meetings. Brethren from seven congregations were present. None of them were teaching their children, but on the second day the ladies told Linda that they are repenting of that and want to begin. Linda taught the ladies how to teach the children, emphasizing teaching them daily at home, and we then gave each congregation a small chalk board and some chalk to use for classes on Sundays. The men asked me to



return and help them learn how to preach – giving them lessons in the day and critiquing their preaching at night. At this place, as at other places, there were several without Bibles and songbooks – and they seemed surprised we did not have some to give them. We and others have done this in the past, but with my advancing age and the unstable political situation, we feel it is time for them to solve their own problems. Brethren in Bulawayo are arranging to print songbooks that will cost them \$3 each. It seems a Bible is about \$7. We suggested that every time they buy a \$1 cell phone “juice card” (as they call it), they take an extra \$0.10 and put it into a container. Soon they will have enough for a Bible. If they have a Bible already, they need to do the same thing and help someone who can’t afford a cell phone to get a Bible. Linda’s interpreters that week were Noma, wife of Newart Ndlovu, a preacher in the Mberengwe area, and Isabelle Moyo from the Saphila congregation in Filabusi. These women, and others like them, (eg. Bigboy’s wife, Ures) have, over the past 10 years, developed into good teachers in their own right and are an invaluable addition to the Lord’s work in Zimbabwe.



Men at Mashula. Darlington is in the blue shirt on the right.

**Week 3: Tsholotsho area with Darlington Ndlovu.** On Sunday morning I preached at Nswazi, north of Gwanda, and in the evening at Hillside in Bulawayo. At Hillside we had the pleasure and privilege of seeing Margaret, the 91-year-old wife of the late Foy Short, her daughter Ellen, and son-in-law David Baize who were visiting from the USA. Foy and Margaret spent virtually their entire adult lives in Zimbabwe, and the family is greatly loved. On Monday we had a day of “rest” to fix a few minor things on the camper, buy groceries and wash a few clothes -- with the help of our dear friend Jennie Edy. The 3 meetings in Tsholotsho were well-organized and well-attended. Here we taught from 9 am (or as soon as we arrived) until 9 pm! The brethren were so very hungry to hear God’s word and 7 were baptized, mainly spouses and children of Christians. Unfortunately, at Mashula, Linda had only a few ladies the second day since the government chose that day to deliver drought assistance. Each family designated by them as “needy,” received 50 kg of maize. There is a lot of work that needs to be done in this area to build up the brethren, as it is very difficult for preachers in Bulawayo to visit often since it is costly in fuel and car maintenance. (Two of my tyres were damaged beyond repair.) We are hoping that Darlington will be able to spend a lot more time in this area, and possibly one day even move there, as it is his original home. On Sunday morning I preached at Colleen Bawn, and we were able to cross the border and arrive safely at the Buchanan house in Louis Trichardt before dark.

**Drought:** The last growing season was a particularly dry year, and the brethren in the Mberengwe and Gwanda South areas are asking for drought assistance until March. (The weather forecast is for a good growing season this year.) There are undoubtedly some widows with dependants and elderly people who need assistance, and I do send money to assist them as I can, but my personal observation is that there is no need for full-scale drought assistance as in the past: aid should be given only to those who are truly lacking basic necessities. Those individuals who would like to assist can contact Bigboy at [bigboydube@yahoo.co.uk](mailto:bigboydube@yahoo.co.uk). As some of you who contributed in the past know, I had trouble collecting receipts for the last months of drought assistance. I imagine the brethren were not so motivated to return their receipts, knowing that the relief effort was coming to an end. This has always bothered me, and I suggested to Bigboy and Gumpo that they collect signatures from at least *some* of the congregations to say that they did indeed receive relief for the months where receipts were missing – or else the messengers make copies

of their personal receipts that brethren were supposed to sign when the delivery was made. Bigboy was happy to do this and worked hard to collect signatures from *each* of the congregations as he went around and held various meetings over the past several months. A copy of these signatures is attached. Unfortunately, Gumpo was unwilling to do this. I really do not know what more I can say to Gumpo to solve this problem that has spanned several months.

**Personal:** South Africa has a law that its citizens cannot renew their passports from outside South Africa, and they cannot enter South Africa on any foreign passport. If their passport expires while they are living abroad, they have to apply for a SA passport “from scratch” – a lengthy, difficult and expensive process. This law affects our children, since they are South African citizens by birth. We are comforted by the fact that our daughter Melody did this a few years ago so that at least one of our children would be able to fly over to assist us if something happened to either of us. (Emergency travel documents are a very expensive option but take 2-3 weeks to process.) We were pleasantly surprised when our son Joseph phoned just before our trip to Zimbabwe to tell us that his SA passport finally arrived, and on top of that, he and Kristen will be arriving, Lord willing, today for about 3 weeks. We will be having a break while they are here.

**Trip to USA:** Joseph had to hurry to fit his trip in before our planned annual trip to the USA. We are due to leave on 24 October and be away 5 weeks – one week with each child and one week with Linda’s mother. We are not really planning to spend time with any congregations on this trip as we have seen everyone in the past year or two, but if anyone who supports us wants us to spend time with them, they must please let us know.

We thank the Lord for blessing us with these opportunities to work for him, and we pray that He will continue to do so. Thank you for your part in our work, especially for the prayers. The Lord truly has blessed us and brought us back safely.

Your fellow-labourer in the kingdom, Les Maydell