



Our Work for the Lord in Southern Africa -- December 2017

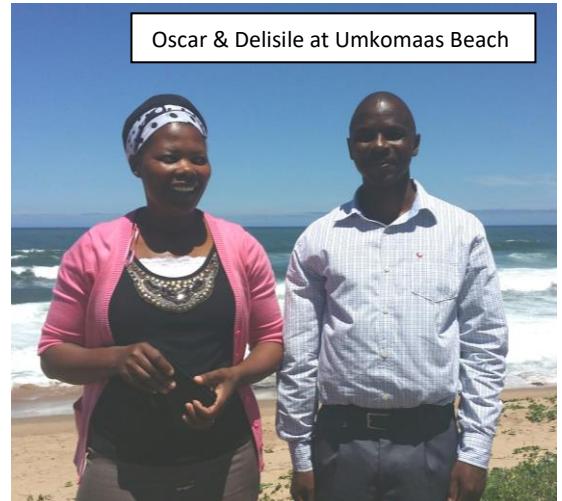
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Dear brethren,

First of all, when we look back at the past year, we see so much to be thankful for – our continued good health, the many opportunities we had to teach both here in South Africa and in Zimbabwe, many expressions of love from brethren, prayers, brethren who have been sick and have recovered, spiritual growth, and your fellowship with us in this work. We wish you all a wonderful new year, to be strengthened spiritually and to impact others for good. May the congregations where you are experience good leadership, peace and growth.

DURBAN AREA: It is with deep sadness that the brethren in the Durban area are bidding farewell to Gloria Cass, the wife of the late Basil Cass who preached in the Durban area for decades and did a wonderful work of building up the brethren here. One of their daughters has invited Gloria, now 77 years old, to come and live with her in the Johannesburg area. The brethren here will sorely miss her, but the brethren at the Little Falls congregation will be blessed by her move. Gloria has been teaching a weekly Bible class for children at the Unit 9 congregation, and serving the Pinetown congregation in many different ways. I've known the Casses since Basil and I were part of a preacher-training class taught by brother Gene Tope in 1968.

Our Sunday schedule remains the same: each Sunday morning I preach by invitation at different congregations. Three Sundays per month Linda and I continue to teach men and women separately during the Bible study time. Each Sunday afternoon I teach the Bible class at the congregation meeting at the Civic Centre in Pinetown, and take turns with the other men in preaching. I teach midweek classes for the Pinetown and Unit 9 groups, (Wednesdays and Thursdays). My studies with Oscar are continuing regularly and are going well. Today his wife, who is off work until next week, attended our study and last Sunday she attended worship with us for the second time. She seemed to be very impressed with the brethren at the Umkomaas congregation and with the hospitality of the Buys family, and we hope she will attend more with us in the future. Even more, both Oscar and Delisile were greatly encouraged by the way Steve and Wendy have overcome the shooting that left Steve a quadriplegic. Kumaren (the Hindu husband of one of the Christians at the Unit 9 congregation) continues to improve physically to the point that he has attended worship the past two Sundays, and last week I was able to have a proper Bible study with him. Thank you for your prayers on his behalf, and we ask you to continue to pray for his spiritual healing. Linda's ladies' class with the Unit 9 ladies, her class with Bommie, and her class with Morgie continue, but were put on hold for the past 2 weeks due to the holidays, people being away, etc. As you can see, our role in the Durban area has mainly been to be encouragers of our brethren, to provide special lessons they may request, and to take the gospel to whoever will give us an opportunity. A wonderful foundation has been laid by preachers who were here before us, and we rejoice to see each congregation doing their own work, using us as and when they see fit.



Oscar & Delisile at Umkomaas Beach

ZIMBABWE: Things politically in Zimbabwe are still a bit unsettled. As most of you probably know, President Mugabe was ousted by the army. The new president Mnangagwa is supposed to hold elections in 2018, which will be a good thing for the country; but it means that it will be a politically tense time and not a good time for us to work in Zimbabwe. The much-needed rainy season is long overdue and many places have had no rain, or very little rain. These good brethren certainly need our prayers, both for rain, and that their new president will be able to turn their country back from the total economic collapse that is looming.

Brother Professor Mashoko, who lives in Bulawayo and travels out to different rural areas to preach, found a used twin-cab pickup truck in Durban via the internet that he thought would be suitable to replace his dilapidated vehicle. He asked me to go and view the vehicle and give my opinion on it. Then he and his eldest son Predecessor came down on the bus and spent a few hectic days here as we tried to complete all the paperwork. It took him several days to get it through the border, but the truck is running well, and we know Professor will put it to good use. The Pinetown congregation enjoyed having him teach the mid-week study, and the men of the Silverglen congregation were happy to see him since they send support to him each month. Linda wrote a special article of encouragement for the Zimbabwe women, made a few hundred copies, and gave it to Professor to distribute. She used to do this regularly by post, but had to stop when the Zimbabwe postal service broke down. Many women have told her how much they miss those articles, so she was happy for the opportunity to let the women know how much she loves and appreciates them.

CHALLENGES:

All the brethren this side were looking forward to the return of Paddy and Sandi after them being in the USA for the past 4 months, but their return was hindered by Sandi's unexpected diagnosis of stage 3C breast cancer. The Kendall-Balls are greatly loved and their work greatly appreciated. The brethren are continuously and fervently praying that the Lord will be merciful to us all and grant her healing, and we ask you to also pray for her. Sandi's treatments will delay their return for several months.



We have been blessed, not only by our own health, but by the health of Linda's mother, who has been able to live independently in a retirement complex the past several years. Sister Link is now 93. Over Christmas she became ill with two different infections that took quite a toll on her. She is now in rehab, but will not be able to stay there longer than 20 days. We were thinking of coming to the USA for an extended period to visit the congregations who support us after the Kendall-Balls returned, but now we feel that it is necessary for us to instead come right away. For the past year, Linda's brother Robert and his wife have spent countless hours seeing to the care of Ellen's mother who fell and broke both femurs, so we feel it is not right to expect them to also see to the extra care that Linda's mom will likely continue to need for the next while. If she recovers speedily and completely, we will hopefully still be able to visit at least some of the congregations who support us, as well as our children, towards the end of our visit. (We booked our trip from Jan 15th to April 12th.) We are supported by two congregations in the St Louis area, and I am hoping that they will be able to use me in some beneficial way while we are there. And I can always use extra time to make new lessons to teach when we return to South Africa, write articles, etc. The love of God in the hearts of our brethren is so wonderful. The brethren here have encouraged us by their prayers and their supportive assurance that they want us to go see to the needs of our

elderly parent. The Lord provided the Gershenson family who offered us a place to stay in St Louis and a car to drive. We do not yet know what our phone number will be in the USA, but you can always email us, giving us your phone number, and we will be happy to contact you. Anyone who already has us as a contact in their phone, including our brethren in Africa, will be able to continue to contact us easily via WhatsApp.



May God continue to bless us all as servants of Jesus Christ in the year ahead. Les Maydell