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# The African Report

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## HOME AGAIN, HOME AGAIN

Wonderful, soothing word: **HOME!** When I was just a youngster, I loved being **home** with my family. Most of us have many fond memories of **home**. I have -- playing ball all day long in the back fields with my brother and neighborhood kids, running to the back door when Mother called us at meal-times, watching the *Long Ranger*, *Roy Rogers*, & *Howdy Doody* on our small-screen TV and going to bed with the chickens. My, my, how that takes me back! Even at 68, I still miss my Mom, especially as it gets near Mother's Day here in May. Moms are special. **Home** is where we feel safe and secure! So... getting **home** from my African trip on April 27<sup>th</sup> was wonderful. I was tired from my travels and enjoyed relaxing a few days at **home** before hitting the road again to speak to churches about the trip and the work being done in several counties that I visited on this journey.

### RESULTS OF FAMINE RELIEF

(Though many of our contacts have received this report via email, we felt that everyone on our larger mailing list should read the following information. JVH)

**March 22, 2009** – In a few moments here this first Sunday evening in Africa, let me describe an experience I had this afternoon in Zimbabwe. I was introduced to a man living on one of the farms that had been taken over by the government from a white farmer sometime ago. This African man and his family, along with many others, have been living on the farm for about 3 years. At that time, the Zimbabwean army/police went into an area on the outskirts on Harare and bulldozed all the houses down, destroying everything the people had. There were any number of homes in the city that were also bulldozed. During the night, the government loaded the people up with what little they had on their backs and took them to this farm. They let them off on the main road and pointed to an area several kilometers away and said, "*That is your new home.*" There was nothing in that area. No houses. No roads. These folks had nothing. No electricity. Nothing. In the darkness, they walked across the fields to their "new home." The only "sin" they were guilty of was what the government had said, "...*they were part of the opposition.*" The wrong tribe. The wrong party. I went to their homes on Sunday, March 22nd -- small little mud brick houses with thatched roofs they had built "*from the ground up.*" I am sure most of the people are sleeping on the ground. A new congregation of the Lord's church has been established in that area. No Christians were there when they were offloaded on the farm after their homes were bulldozed by the government. Surprisingly, those

people are alright with the problems they have suffered because they have now found Christianity! I was so impressed with their attitude and their outlook on life.

Last year, a preacher for a small congregation in Knoxville, **Kirk White**, brought \$2100 he had collected from the Asbury congregation and individuals who wanted to help Christians in Zimbabwe. **Kirk** and I met with some of the Zimbabwean brethren who attended our SABC lectureship the end of September to discuss the problems in Zimbabwe. We converted the US\$\$ to SA Rand and **Kirk** gave that money to those faithful brethren to take back home and help Christians (and others) in Zimbabwe. One of the preachers that received some of the money was a man by the name of Redfin. This man is constantly preaching to everyone he sees. Just a few months ago, he met one of the men that had been moved to this farm. In time, and with study, **Redfin** baptized him. This man, along with about 60 members of the church living on the farm, attended the workshop I participated in at the Avondale church in Harare this weekend. One of the Avondale elders, **Washington Mhlanga**, went with his big truck and picked up those members from the farm on Saturday morning. He made two trips to bring that many people back to the workshop. I met several of the Christians.

On Sunday, I asked Washington if we could go out to meet with the Christians on that farm. When we got there around 3:00, over a very difficult road through the fields, they had just finished their "morning" worship service which had started around 10:00. They came running out to where we parked the truck. Washington was taking some mealie meal (white ground cornmeal) to them. I had been told they are very eager to study. All of them are very evangelistic. They continue to baptize people living on the farm. They only have one or two Bibles and NO song books. They did have a study book that Washington had given to them written by Roger Dickson of Cape Town. They were extremely friendly. Everyone smiled all the time. Remember, these people had lost everything they owned to the government bulldozers. Many of them had been beaten by the army or policemen. They had every right to be bitter, angry and unhappy, but there were no indications of that, whatsoever. They have built a small "lean-to" for a meeting place. It had 4 posts on each corner and thatching grass on top. That is where more than 60 Christians are meeting. Right next to that little lean-to was a small building they had started. It was only

4 or 5 rows high with the sun-baked mud bricks - not big enough for the church to meet in. We inquired what the building was going to be used for. Now, listen to this... "That is going to be our library and study area." They are planning to begin seriously studying the Bible.

You cannot believe the eagerness of the people to study and help the church grow in that area. I had already talked to Washington about helping them to study using a Sunset study program. He thought it would be a great idea. We announced that prospect to them to see if they would be willing to come to Avondale to study some Bible courses (they do not know anything about Sunset, of course). You would have thought they had just inherited a million dollars. The plan is to help these new Christians in the Lord. When I said good-bye to them, it became very emotional for me. I have never seen anything like these people. We must help them to help themselves in their efforts to evangelize in their neighborhood thru training in God's Word. They are so eager to learn.

#### **OTHER TRAVELS IN AFRICA**

From Zimbabwe I returned to South Africa. **Bill Elliott** came from East London to visit, and together we drove my van down to East London for a weekend meeting at the Keam Road congregation where he preaches. While there, he got word that his dad had been baptized that Saturday night back home in Oliver Springs, TN. Also, his dad was gravely ill and not expected to live very long. Bill changed his flight ticket and, on my way further south to attend a missionary retreat, I dropped him at the East London airport to return home. Bill got to TN in time to visit a couple of hours before his dad passed away April 1<sup>st</sup>. The funeral that could have been so sad was brightened due to **William Elliott, Sr's** baptism on Saturday. It was a time to rejoice!

#### **MISSIONARY RETREAT**

I enjoyed participating in a missionary retreat at George, SA conducted by **John & Beth Reese** of **World Bible School**. After returning to Benoni, I flew to Malawi for the annual Lectureship where I spoke twice. While there, I went with two men from the Green Valley church in Noblesville, IN to look at property for a training school near Lilongwe. The GV church had some funding to pay for the property, but as it turned out, the village chief said he wanted to, "...give this property to God!" What more could we ask?

#### **MAPEPE BIBLE SCHOOL--LUSAKA, ZAMBIA**

I have taught classes at this Sunset Branch school several times over the past few years. Each time I go, new buildings and improvements have been added. **David French** and his staff are doing a great job with many plans to add vocational and agricultural training to the

bible-based curriculum. It was great to visit this school again. Pray that their dreams and goals succeed.

#### **BOTSWANA SCHOOL (ACTS)**

After returning to home-base in Benoni, my next flight was to Gaborone, Botswana to visit the **African Centre for Theological Studies (ACTS)** where **Dennis Malepa** is the director. Due to funds and staffing, the plan is to enroll and teach 3 or 4 students for a 2-year period. After their completion of required courses and graduation, another group of students enroll. It has worked well so far and several preachers are scattered around in Botswana working for congregations. In the past few years, I have used school-break weeks from SABC to teach courses at this Sunset-related training program in Botswana and always enjoy my time there.

#### **TAKING ADVANTAGE OF FREEBIES**

On this trip, I was able to use frequent-flyer miles for trips in and out of South Africa via SAA to neighboring countries which was a tremendous savings for me. I only had to pay the taxes and fees on each ticket. It was advantageous in that I had a few days in-between trips to visit the Bible College in Benoni and preach for the church there as well. I always enjoy staying in the flat on the SABC campus. This was an exhausting trip but very enlightening and hopefully encouraging for the schools I visited in 3 places & reviewed potential ones at 2 sites.

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Your financial support and assistance for famine relief funds for Zimbabwe was much appreciated on this trip. Pray for all these schools and the churches that many workers will be trained for the Kingdom. For those who assist, it is YOUR work for the Lord. I truly wish I could take you along to witness the good works going on all over Africa. You would be blessed abundantly! God be with you who receive and read this report.

—**Jerry & Ann Hogg**

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