Serving the Lord in Zimbabwe

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"And let us not be weary in well doing: for in due season we shall reap, if we faint not. As we have therefore opportunity, let us do good unto all men, especially unto them who are of the household of faith." (Gal. 6: 9,10).

Some 12 years ago, we were introduced to the manager of one of the agricultural farms in a farming community some two hours drive away from Harare. This farm later became one of our bases as we met with a small group of its workers, as well as groups of Pastors and leaders in two neighboring towns.

Once our stint of ministry in that area ended, we hardly ever visited that farm in the intervening years, until recently when its present manager fell ill with colon cancer. We took the opportunity to be of support to the owners during their time of need, happy that we were able to stand with people whom the Lord had so graciously used in our lives during our early years of ministry here.





Since Zimbabwe was under yet another lockdown, we had to get special permission from the authorities to travel out of Harare. What a joy to see farmlands, and even lands that had been lying fallow for years, now lush green and full of healthy-looking crops of maize, sorghum and soya beans. Indeed, what a blessing from the Lord - to which the trees of the field, and the people alike all clap their hands! You see, over the past few years, most of Zimbabwe has suffered from

severe, successive droughts, resulting in food and water shortages. So, like the rest of the Nation, our hearts are full of thanksgiving to the Lord for sending us some five months of "showers of blessings".

During our visit to the farm, we were introduced to the prospective new manager. The owners had been looking for someone to help with the management of the farm and had been praying for confirmation that this person was the right candidate for the job. On being introduced to him as missionaries, this young man then told us that he had come from four generations of missionaries. It turns out that his grandparents, the late Rev. Dave Broom and his wife Maxine (now both deceased), were used greatly of the Lord to encourage us in our early years of ministry here. They were the ones who introduced us to Gweru the year after our arrival. What a great networker our Heavenly Father is!

An added joy was to meet Dickson, one of the farm workers in the small group with whom we used to meet years ago. He now pastors a Church on the farm and has a vibrant ministry among the youth there. He is also well respected among the workers and they meet and pray together before commencing their daily farm duties.

One thing we all can learn from farming is that, once the farmer sows many rows of seed in a field, he must devote much time, effort and resources to ensure that the fields are well-watered, weeded and pest free, if the vulnerable plants are to progress to fruit-bearing in due season. The resulting harvest is left to the type of soil, weather conditions and time. While we thank God for encouraging our hearts by showing us a little fruit from the seed He used us to sow years ago, we have learned by His grace that we are not to judge our efforts by the amount of fruit that is spontaneously produced, but by our faithfulness in sowing and nurturing, as the Lord gives us opportunity.



Thank you for praying with us in this regard.

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Wednesday June 16th, 2021

It is 3.30 on a warm, sunny winter's afternoon. This warmth would likely last for less than another hour and then it becomes increasingly cold as evening sets in. Today, the skies are blue with beautiful patches of cloud here and there. This beautiful and picturesque drive back to Harare takes us through the Dykes, a range of mountains that embraces most of Zimbabwe's fifty-plus mineral deposits. It is not always an easy drive as the road is always dotted with huge trucks travelling to and from neighboring South Africa to countries to our north, as far as the Democratic Republic of Congo. Like most others, we are trying to weave our way past those large trucks to the tollbooth so that we avoid the congestion there. After this, our next challenge will be navigating the rush hour traffic on the way to the City of Harare, which greets one like a frenzied flood.

Zimbabwe is again under lockdown! However, one of the many blessings of this lockdown is that it has not affected our weekly out-of-town trip as we are still within the boundaries set by the authorities for Mashonaland West, of which Harare is a part.

However, our in-person groups as well as preaching ministry on Sunday mornings are affected and our online groups are increasingly challenging because of problematic internet access, even when we have power.

Nevertheless, we know that God is not fazed by any of this. We can see His hand at work in our own lives, and in the outflow of the lives of individuals and families to whom He ministers through us. Jesus Himself said, "Without me you can do nothing." Over the years, we have learnt and continue to learn with each faltering step that self-effort only leads to frustration, and submission is key in our walk with Him. Scriptures like Proverbs 3: 5-6, Rom 6: 6-11 Rom 8: 1-17 are increasingly precious to us in these times. How privileged we are.

Our hearts are also greatly encouraged by what our Heavenly Father is doing among various groups within the body of believers here. These brethren are being used of Him to reach many within our society, in needy communities as well as among the more affluent ones. Indeed, people need God now more than ever.

We are also happy that there is a growing number of folks here who recognize that we must pray for those in authority over us, whether we support them or not. The realization that only God can truly steer the course of our lives is becoming more and more evident in our fallen world and praying to and trusting Him, rather than fretting, is our only way to victory.

Our thanks to God and to all of you who have been journeying with us these past several years. We appreciate your continued prayers for us and for those whom God sends into our lives. These are difficult times for us all, so let us continue to pray for each other.

Indeed, we are fellows in the same ship (fellowship).



Dhan & Dolly Lalsee Serving the Lord in Zimbabwe

March 2021

Ranga

Dear Friends,

Happy Resurrection!

"Icease not to give thanks for you, making mention of you in my prayers" ~ Eph1:15-16

In our last letter, we remarked that the whole Nation was crying out for rain. Since then, we have had an abundance of showers causing some damage to communities, bridges, and other infrastructure as well as to some crops. But on the plus side, everywhere is now nice and green. The water table has certainly been replenished and we are trusting the Father for an adequate water supply during the coming winter months – our dry season.

Our last lock down which started early January, ended early March. Mask wearing is still mandatory, large gatherings are not permitted except for funerals and Church services where strict Covid protocols must be observed. Both the infection rate and the death rate are now relatively low (six deaths in the past 7 days). Inter-city travel is now permitted and many are breathing a sigh of relief as businesses reopen. Because of the lock down, until recently stores were still displaying Christmas specials. There is certainly a lot of catching up to do!

During the lock down, Ranga, a young lady in one of our groups had a microwave coffee burn to her face and eyes. She has no health insurance and private medical care is way above the average worker's means. Driving through Police roadblocks, we took her to a private Emergency Room, where she was referred to an eye specialist attached to the hospital. Fearing the cost, we instead messaged our eye specialist who agreed to see Ranga. After examination, it was determined that her headaches were not due to the burn to her face, which miraculously did not scar, but to severe astigmatism for which she needed glasses. We were later referred to the ophthalmology wing of a teaching hospital, through which Ranga got the much-needed glasses for a fraction of the cost. Our Heavenly Father truly cares about the needy and is a great networker!

God has certainly kept us through it all. And we are so very thankful for His demonstrations of love through the many of you who have been praying with and for us and for encouraging us by WhatsApp, emails and Zoom meets. To facilitate their missionaries in different time zones, the Missions Council of one of our supporting churches changed their evening prayer time to a morning one. What a precious time that was as we prayed with and for each other!

Our hearts are overflowing with gratitude to our Heavenly Father for keeping us focused. Throughout these past weeks and months, we have seen His hand at work both in our lives and in the lives of those with whom we are in contact. Many of them no longer want a nominal Christianity but a living vibrant relationship with their Lord. Such relationship of course comes at a cost because submission to and dependence on God goes against man's natural bent.

A highly respected friend recently shared this truth with us from Rom 6:5 and we quote: "For us to be planted more deeply in Christ (His resurrection life), we must be planted ever more deeply in His death (the Cross)".

May Father so work in us all that we may become a true expression of the Church in our very troubled world.

In Him,

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These past few months, the Lord has blessed us with some interesting experiences. Among them were the wedding of one of our spiritual daughters just a few hours before our latest lockdown, the observing of our 48th wedding anniversary and the airlifting out of Afghanistan by German military aircraft of our dear Zimbabwean friend who headed a Christian NGO there, with her team.

The challenges, both personal and within members of our groups, friends and family, have been many and painful. But through it all, the Lord has been doing some marvelous things. We have seen the many expressions of His love within the body as believers rally around each other in prayer and with practical demonstrations of their love, along with a desire to know Him.

"Truly, truly I say to you, unless you eat the flesh of the Son of Man and drink his blood, you have no life in your-selves...... Just as the living Father has sent me, and I live by the Father, so, he who eats my flesh and drinks my blood will live by me (John 6:53, 57 - KJV).

Since Churches here have seldom held in-person services this year, we have been privileged to speak at some in-person small groups in the Harare area. At one such group at which Dhan spoke, I began to ponder afresh the import of Jesus' statement above. Subsequently, the Lord showed me a picture of the baby in utero. This little life is connected to its mama by the umbilical cord from and by which it is sustained until birth, completely without any effort of its own –the baby is literally living by the life of its mother. Any attempted effort on its part will impede, not hasten, the growth process.

A painful real-life example drove the point home:

For the past several weeks, we had been praying with a family friend for the safe delivery of her daughter Princess who was pregnant with twins. One baby was thriving, the other (Little Pea) was not. Then suddenly Little Pea began to put on weight and we were all excited. As Princess went into labor, there was a team of doctors standing by to give medical attention to Little Pea at birth. She was born first, weighed in at 5lbs but her medical condition was beyond the ability of the medical team. She lived for less than 48 hours.

"I am the vine, you are the branches, if a man remains in me and I in him, he will bear much fruit; apart from me, you can do nothing." John 15:5

Little Pea, lived by the life of another and thrived. Outside of that life, she could not survive. Her little life, though short, is a poignant reminder for all of us to take heed of Christ's plea to us to remain in Him.

Thank you for your prayers for us and for our fellow missionaries on the field.

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"It is good to give thanks unto the Lord" (Psalm:92)

In recent months, the nations of Canada, Grenada and the United States observed their respective days of thanksgiving. To fully appreciate why earlier generations saw it fit to mark those days as days of remembrance and thanksgiving, each of these nations must look back into their own history.

Here in Zimbabwe, the challenges nationally, within the body of Christ and families, abound. However, in the midst of it all, as we look back particularly over the last three months, we confess that there is very much to be thankful for. For instance:

- The joy of seeing and embracing our Zimbabwean missionary friend and enjoying fellowship with her at our home for the first time since her dramatic exit from Afghanistan by military aircraft earlier this year.
- The expressions of love shown to families within the Body who have had to cope with death, mysterious illnesses, and some unbelievable accidents one young lady was tossed some 50 meters into the air, was laying seemingly lifeless on the road when she was picked up by a total stranger and taken to hospital. Several surgeries later, and with many battle scars, she is now able to walk without crutches and her memory is gradually being restored!
- The seemingly mundane things, like water, which has been flowing freely from our taps despite this unexpectedly prolonged dry season
- For sunshine which provides us with solar energy throughout our many, daily power cuts
- For you our family, friends, fellow-believers, prayer and financial partners whom our Father uses to meet our needs
- Above all for Jesus, our very Life, in whom and through Whom we have this precious relationship with our Heavenly Father.

Last night we had some painful news of a local church here that is facing some serious challenges. This is a very caring congregation whom we have grown to love, and our hearts are sore. This morning, in the midst of our pain, the Lord laid a song upon our hearts: "You are Beautiful" by Jeremy Riddle, Bethel Music. Indeed, He is.

This Advent season, may Father grant to each of us, grace to look above our many challenges, dangers and woes; and passionately and more meaningfully than ever before, celebrate His precious Gift to us - Him whose beauty is truly beyond description!



Dhan & Dolly Lalsee Serving the Lord in Zimbabwe

September 2021

Dear Friends,

Greetings from sunny Harare! We are so thankful that our winter is over, our orchids are in bloom, the indigenous msasa trees have now taken on new leaves and there is a sense of expectancy as we look forward to nature in its resplendence in the coming months.

"Your eyes saw my unformed body, all the days ordained for me were written in your book before one of them came to be" (Psalm 139:16)

Even as we write, the spirit of fear continues to spread its tentacles paralyzing many here in its grip. We personally struggled with the decision whether to take the Covid vaccine or not. The more we searched for clarity the more conflicting the information from the experts became. We concluded that nothing and no one could pluck us out of our Lord's hands. He is the One who has numbered our days and no vaccine or earthly powers can change that. Additionally, it seemed to us that we would never be allowed to make the long journey home to visit our family without a vaccination certificate. So, we took the vaccine.

A few weeks later, we both came down with Covid as did several of our neighbors, one of whom (47 years old) later died at the hospital. Thank God, our condition was relatively mild. Those of us who had been vaccinated came off lightly. This Country has suffered badly from the Delta variant. Let us hope we have really learnt from this experience.

Although our subsequent PCR tests proclaimed us "Negative", we are still somewhat in recovery mode which, we now understand is part of the fallout from the Covid experience. We both struggled with physical, mental, emotional, and spiritual lethargy. Physically, we quickly resumed our walking in the neighborhood, although in moderation; and we tried to regain our spiritual equilibrium through hymns, worship songs and the Word. Yes, our Father is faithful!

We have seen His hand at work in so many poignant ways throughout this journey. Many believers were praying for us, sending words of encouragement, delivering freshly-made soups, doing our shopping, and dropping much needed medical supplies to our front door. At the same time, others totally unaware of our illness, were seeking our counsel, asking for our prayer support, or seeking clarity on a portion of Scripture. The Lord was demonstrating His love for us through His people - meeting our physical and emotional needs and protecting us from spiritual sluggishness. It has indeed been a painfully sweet journey.

A couple weeks after our "Negative" tests, we resumed meeting on Sundays with a small group of believers in Harare. Yesterday, Dhan had his first preaching engagement at a Retirement home where he had been ministering for some years.

Please join us in giving thanks to the Lord for His faithfulness to us, and for the healing He has brought and continues to bring to our bodies daily. Also, for the spiritual healing He daily ministers to our souls, assuring us of His Fatherly love as He takes us deeper into our relationship with Him.

Kindly also join us in praying for those with whom we meet online, that they would remain faithful to the Lord and that He would fill them with a growing desire to know Him. Please also pray for an improvement in our electricity supply, and internet access.

Thank you, dearly Beloved for your faithfulness to us in prayer and finances. May the Lord also supply your daily needs.

Blessings, Dhan & Dolly