

# *Dhan & Dolly Lalsee*

## Serving the Lord in Zimbabwe

*dhandolly@hotmail.com*

Tel: +263 712 218 896 (calls only) WhatsApp: Dhan +263 715 472 486; Dolly +263 736 261 000



When we first arrived in Zimbabwe almost fourteen years ago, we were totally convinced the Lord had sent us here to help believers grow in their relationship with the Lord. We set out doing this, first, in the capital city, Harare, and later in smaller cities. In each case, we met in groups with Pastors and Church leaders, teaching, discussing, encouraging. Since the onset of the Covid pandemic, however, we now rarely travel out of Harare. Instead, from our home, we meet online with individuals and groups weekly. Last week, we started a new in-person group. Our goal is the same as before – we grow, together and individually, to maturity in our relationship with the Lord. We also continue to meet with individuals at our home over morning coffee, afternoon tea or lunch for teaching and/or mutual encouragement in the faith.

Having had Covid, we were reflecting on the fact that one of the worst things persons recovering from it can do is to measure their recovery progress on a day-to-day basis as this often results in doubt, frustration and despair. The same is true of the work God has called us to - success can only be measured by the level of our faithfulness to God's call. The rest must be left to His Sovereign will.

However, we rejoice and give thanks to Him for those "Timothies" who over the past few months have called, emailed, or visited and expressed their thankfulness for how God has helped them through this ministry.

Sometimes, it seems difficult to believe that God is indeed working out His purposes as they apply to us. As the war in Ukraine escalates and Covid seems to be making a rebound, we must remind ourselves of who He is and who we are in Him; and find our rest in Him alone.

You might ask, 'Why is that so important?' Well, for one thing, much of the New Testament is taken up with this very attitude. For example, in the letter to the Hebrews, the writer repeatedly encourages the reader, "Let us go on". Secondly, we are convinced that the degree of our effectiveness and fruitfulness, individually and collectively, will be determined by the degree of our pursuit of a vibrant and dynamic relationship with the Lord. There is no other way to be able to cope with the increasingly trying times that are upon us or are yet to come.

Dear Friends, please pray with us as we meet with these individuals and groups, as we encourage each other through the pages of Holy Scripture, "and all the more as we see the day approaching." (Hebrews 10:35).

Thanks for your part in the ministry.



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February 22, 2022

Beloved,

Yes, you haven't heard from us since November. In our last letter to you, we commented that these were very challenging times for everyone, that we must be prepared for what is yet to come, and that only a dynamic relationship with the Lord Jesus Christ will see us through. This does not suggest that we are like pawns on a giant chessboard waiting for the next player's move. We know that the Lord is sovereignly working out His purposes for the entire universe and for us, not as mere innocent bystanders but as active participants in this drama called Life.

This last Christmas was very different for us. Although two children of neighboring friends helped in mounting and decorating our tree, we hardly turned on the lights after Christmas Day. The excitement of past years just wasn't there. Perhaps it's more than our age; our focus has shifted. Beyond the tinsel, lights and gifts, we wanted to celebrate Christmas as God bringing to humanity the greatest revelation of all time - His own Son, ('God in a human body' (Col. 2:9, NLT)), to live among us and to reveal the Father and His purposes to us (Heb. 1:1-3). We are gripped by this profound Truth and its significance to us today. Because Christ came to earth as a man, we who know Him as our Lord and Savior, can find meaning and have hope regardless of the circumstances.

This year began with a test of whether we really believed that. On January 5<sup>th</sup>, Dolly fell ill. Within two hours, she moved from being fine, to not feeling well, to shivering with a very high fever. It was quite a night. The following day she seemed fine and tested negative for COVID. On the 7<sup>th</sup>, we called in the Doctor who immediately diagnosed her as having Pneumonia. He began a combo of aggressive treatment and frequent blood tests. She was very ill but within a few days, the Lord brought her through the worst. Now, her only lingering problem is her tendency to sudden dips in her energy. Praise God she is gradually overcoming this by exercise and drinking lots of fluids. But she was very ill.

Meanwhile, in December, I had been diagnosed with a pinched nerve in my lower back. Because of Dolly's illness, I had to put my own treatment on hold. I am consulting a neurosurgeon (a delightful young man who loves the Lord). We are agreed on avoiding surgery by other interventions. So, I am being gradually helped by twice-weekly physio and pain killers when necessary.

In just five months, I twice witnessed the Lord bring Dolly back. We thank God for His mercies towards us and, by His grace, we believe He is working out His larger purposes for us. Our Lord is worthy of all praise!

So far this year, sluggishness has characterized the ministry. For one thing, there were our illnesses, and then the lethargy brought on by the pandemic. The main group who had shown so much promise and into whom we had been pouring much, have been caught between going back to the “same old, same old” of which they had complained when they first invited us to share with them. Our goal was the same as with other groups - to help them grow in their relationship with the Lord.

We know you and several others from so many countries have been praying for us when you were mostly in the dark about our circumstances. We are privileged to have been the subject of your prayers and are deeply grateful for this. Please continue to remember us as you intercede.

We also remember you in our prayers and give thanks for your faithfulness in your support for the ministry.

May He who is faithful continue to supply all your needs and those of your loved ones and bless you with every spiritual blessing in Christ Jesus.

Much love to you all.

*Dhan & Dolly*

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Time is running by so quickly that it feels like only a few weeks ago we wrote an article for this newsletter. No doubt many of us wish the global and personal challenges pressing us for attention would fly away as quickly as they flew in, and things would get back to a state of normalcy. Sadly, in our neck of the woods there is no such thing as normal, and it may well be that this sentiment is being echoed worldwide.

However, the people of this nation are resilient, and they are good at "making a plan". Having survived hyperinflation and a host of other challenges, they are facing yet another economic crisis with determination. Their entrepreneurial spirit, evidenced by the growing informal market, has been the saving grace of many communities.

The Church is also grappling with these socio-economic and other challenges in the aftermath of Covid. Many believers have migrated, while others have either moved to churches they consider more 'vibrant' or have stopped attending services altogether. Even the self-styled prophets who peddle an adulterated 'gospel' (which is not the Gospel at all) for financial gain are feeling the economic pinch. Through it all, it is also true that the Lord is drawing a nucleus of people, the true Church, to Himself.

We are privileged to fellowship with young people as well as older folk who have a passion for the Lord. One example, among others, is that of a university graduate who could easily find a job in the marketplace but who is quietly serving her Lord in this country on as little as \$25.00 per month. The maths does not add up, but all her basic needs are being met, praise God. She bears true witness to our Lord's teaching in Matt. 6:33.

Many believers feel intimidated at sharing the Gospel message in a formal setting but will give of their time to reach out with the love of God in their communities and beyond in practical ways. Most of these folks have themselves suffered great losses, yet they reach out to others at great personal cost. Indeed, we are blessed to be part of the Body of Christ and to experience His love and the joy of fellowshiping with Him and His people.

Let us continue to pray for and encourage each other in our walk with Him. Times are hard, but our Lord is faithful and can be trusted to carry us through the toughest of seasons. Lam 3:22-23.

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There are many lessons to be learnt from nature, one of them being the seasons. Wherever we are, seasons exist. In some countries, the seasons are more distinct than in others, but they are still there.

Here in Zimbabwe, all of Africa is north of us except South Africa. We have only two distinct seasons, the dry season, winter and the rainy season or summer. Winter, around May to August, can be quite cold. White potatoes and wheat prevail then but must be irrigated. During the summer, the Country receives most of its rainfall supplied mostly by the Indian Ocean cyclones. Some crops, for example maize, soya, sorghum, and tobacco are grown in the summer. It is not unusual for the rains to be minimal or delayed. Sometimes, there can also be quite a lapse between the changing seasons often resulting in drought.

Another feature here is the changing landscape. Every season brings with it a variety of flowering trees and shrubs. For example, as winter fades, a local shade tree, the msasa, drops all its leaves (some call it Fall) and almost immediately begins to sprout new leaves in various hues of red/orange/rust/tan etc. This lasts but a few days until it is replaced by new leaves in tender shades of green. The blue/purple jacaranda appears before long and sheds its flowers on the street, sidewalk, or yard beneath. What sights to behold!

Isn't natural life like that too? Every stage has its own distinctive features – turning, creeping, walking, teething, growing into adulthood, getting into midlife, becoming seniors, and so on. Some phases are characterized by the need for help, others by an independent streak. But they all go to make up a life.

So too is spiritual life. We may recall our beginning often marked by uncertainty, sometimes doubt, and our need for reassurance. Then we embarked on what is usually called the Christian life – participation in a local church and its activities, self-confidence, busyness, perhaps years in some form of well-intentioned ministry. It is then we might begin to sense a shallowness in our relationship with the Lord and might ask ourselves: 'Is this all?', 'Have I been on the right track?', 'Has it been worthwhile?'. Then perhaps fear that we had been walking in only the shadow of something far more real and greater than we had experienced grips us as we contemplate the approaching dim light of the evening of our days here on earth.

In the Lord's grace, we begin to see our Lord Jesus Christ as the Reality of our salvation and wish we had more time to explore the depth of His riches which, sadly, were missed during most of our Christian life. We read again Colossians 2:9, 10 from the New Living Translation – "For in Christ lives all the fullness of God in a human body. So, you are complete through your union with Christ...." Other passages of Scripture lead us to conclude, 'Yes, that's what it's about ..... Christ!', for "He is the sum of all things"; and the kind of Christians we are and the measure of His fullness in us will be determined exclusively by our knowledge of Him. As we contemplate further, perhaps we reflect on how we might be eulogized by our loved ones and we fear they might just present a brighter picture of our walk with the Lord than it really was.

This was our motivation when we hosted a four-day Retreat last month for nine persons some of whom we had been meeting with face-to-face, pre-Covid. This, together with our continuing online group meetings, has been the highlight of our last three years here. Not only was there good participation, but we are excited by the level of discussion via What's App that has followed.

To those of you who have been a part of this ministry, we thank God for you and your faithfulness. May He continue to provide all your needs – spiritual and physical – and may we daily grow in appreciation of His abundant grace towards us. Let us hold on to that grace so that we will appropriate all that He has purposed for us, His children. And may we, unashamedly, cry out to Him that He might grant us a clearer vision of Who He really is. This might just be one of the most meaningful seasons of our lives!

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***“The people living in darkness have seen a great light; on those living in the land of the shadow of death, a light has dawned”  
Matthew 4:16***

What a year this has been for all of us! At the close of 2021, the world hoped that we would see the end of the Covid pandemic and life would return to “normal”. Before long, however, we were told that further mutations were appearing. Thankfully, it does not appear that these have been as widespread as previously.

Then, not long afterwards, we were greeted with the news of the Russian invasion of Ukraine. In its long trail is the mass destruction of substantial parts of Ukraine’s infrastructure, hospitals, housing, and the loss of numerous lives. Almost simultaneously, many parts of the world witnessed increased fuel prices as well as scarcity of basic food items. Sadly, this war now hardly makes the front pages as the world seeks to continue with life as usual. Then there seems to have been an increase in natural disasters while violent crimes are also on the up. Despite all these challenges, the rich seem to become richer, and the poor become poorer while many strive to find a reason, any reason, to celebrate and party.

Through it all, many continue to preach and to make personal gain of ‘a gospel which is no Gospel at all’. They boast of having the largest mega churches, followers, and titles, while hardly giving a thought for those whom they so woefully mislead. But we all have our reward.

Yes, what a world we live in! Nevertheless, there is real reason to celebrate. For God continues to demonstrate His loving kindness towards humanity, even to those who make every effort to deny that He even exists. They look for opportunities to shake their fists at Him in open and even in state-sanctioned defiance.

But we can rest assured that He is not mocked and is ready to forgive everyone who genuinely turns to Him. When will mankind ever learn that the Lord’s stubborn love never fails, His mercies are new every morning and endure forever? We praise Him that despite all that is happening throughout the world - the natural and man-made calamities - many are turning to Him in Whom they find hope, rest and meaning. Nothing else really counts, does it? Today, many sick are still being healed, and the estranged are being reconciled. We praise the Lord that for many, it is not business as usual but the beginning of a new day with the Him, growing in the knowledge of Him, and the assurance of a future when everything will finally fall into place.

We are now in our thirty-seventh year as full time missionaries and our fifteenth working here in Zimbabwe. More than ever, we are committed to continue sharing the Gospel in its entirety so that the unsaved can come to know Christ as their Savior and those who are born-again can reach for the goal of our heavenly Father – “Christlikeness”. He does not want any of His children to fall short of this mark. Although there are frequent disappointments, there are many more encouragements and much to look forward to in the coming year.

We truly praise our Heavenly Father for His healing upon both of us this past year – Dolly from Covid pneumonia in January and Dhan from back surgery in October. We praise Him too for the Discipleship Retreat which we had with some Pastors/Leaders this past August and for the signs of growth which we are seeing in the lives of many. Please join us in praying for a real heart for the Lord by His people, and for further opportunities to bring Pastors/Leaders together in the months ahead.

As we close off this year and look forward to 2023 (if the Lord tarries), we pray that He might create in each of us a deeper desire to know Christ for who He really is in His fullness – that He is not only God’s mind to us as an utterance; He is God’s Word as a Person! All glory be to Him!

***Have a blessed Christmas season and an adventurous New Year in Him!***



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## Serving the Lord in Zimbabwe

June 2022

Our hearts were filled with joy as we celebrated and reflected on this very special time for us believers; a time when His children can ponder afresh the death, burial, resurrection and ascension of our Lord Jesus and its significance to us both individually and collectively. It still boggles our minds that the Almighty and Everlasting God would choose to go through such lengths to rescue mankind from their enslavement to the kingdom and systems of this world and call us into a relationship with Him. So, we celebrate with thanksgiving to our Heavenly Father, the gift of His Son, the Resurrected Christ, our Savior, our Lord, our Life.

Many of you are just coming into your summer with its uncertain weather conditions so prevalent these days. As we in the southern hemisphere begin another winter, some of the things that brings much cheer to our hearts are the stunning sunrises and the wonderful array of colors in yards and roadsides. Very few of you would expect to see poinsettias at this time of year, so let us share with you some of what we see on our walks in the neighbourhood.



The single, like this one, comes in white, salmon pink, red and pale yellow. There is also a red double. The wild cherry blossoms can be seen in various colors too. The vast array of flowering trees, shrubs and flowers simply abound. All these reflect the glory of our Creator and Lord and His way of taking our focus off our myriad challenges to feast our eyes and hearts on Him and His handiwork.

This nation, like much of the rest of the world, is experiencing turmoil and hardships, but we thank God for the assurance of His sustaining grace and His presence with us always: "For behold, I am with you always, even unto the end of time." May He accomplish His purposes in and through all of us His children wherever He has planted us.

Thank you for your love and support expressed in so many ways these past weeks. It is always a joy to receive emails, WhatsApp, I-messages and phone calls. Only an hour ago, a friend from Grenada reminded us of their daily prayers for us. Thank you all for standing with us in prayer both for ourselves, our family and for the ongoing ministry here.

These past few months, we have continued to meet with individuals and groups many of whom have been facing family illnesses or become victims of vehicular or other accidents and challenges. There has also been an increase in pulpit ministry as the churches regroup in the aftermath of Covid.

We give thanks and praise to our Father for His continued work in our personal lives as well as in the hearts and lives of those whom we are privileged to work alongside. As the economic crisis deepens, some of these individuals migrate or move to different cities much to our pain and disappointment, but we hope and trust that the seeds that were sown will bear fruit in His time.

May Father continue to minister to your own needs and draw us all onto Himself.

Much love to you all.

*Dhan & Dolly*

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July 2022

Firstly, we want to thank you for your faithfulness in partnering with us in the ministry to which the Lord has called us here in Zimbabwe since June 2008. In fact, several of you have been supporting us since the 1980's when we first became missionaries. To you all we express our deep and heartfelt appreciation, far beyond what our words can convey.

You will no doubt recall an oft-quoted cliché, that the Church here is a mile long but only an inch deep. Often, this seems to us to be an understatement. Reaching 'churched' people, helping them to grow in Christlikeness so that they can realize God's purposes for them, and be equipped to serve as He directs them, was the burden that our Lord laid on our hearts in 2007 as He prepared us to come here. Since our arrival, the validity of this objective has been reinforced to us time and again. Over the years, the Lord has brought us into contact with hundreds whom He has enabled us to help in their desire to know Him more fully. Outside of Harare, we would usually meet with them in groups in a variety of mostly very humble venues at dozens of different locations.

When the Covid pandemic first appeared in these parts in March 2020, we had to put a halt to travelling to our groups outside Harare and, since then, we have not been able to resume these trips mainly due to the deterioration of the roads, the rising cost of fuel, and inflation. But their spiritual needs have weighed heavily on our hearts, and we longed to meet them again in person. Once before, we met in Harare with several of them at a four-day retreat organized by us. About a month ago, Dhan woke up one morning having just dreamt of meeting with several of them at another such retreat. Later that morning, we received a phone message from the people who operated the venue where we had last met, saying that they had not heard from us for a while. Sensing that this was of the Lord, we began to pray about it and were convinced that it was indeed Him, and that we should host another retreat.

Consequently, we will be hosting a retreat from Sunday August 7<sup>th</sup> thru Wednesday August 10<sup>th</sup>, two of these days being national holidays. The theme is "*we will in all things grow up into Him who is the head, that is, Christ*" (Eph. 4:15). Already, we have some fourteen 'sleep-ins' from the rural areas and ten 'walk-in' participants from Harare and are now in the process of finalizing our preparations.

We are really excited about this event as are many of those who have already signed up. Our purpose in writing is not merely to give you an update but also to ask for your fervent prayers for the event. Obviously, the object is not merely meeting together but in meeting with the Lord. Here are some of the specific needs:

- Thanksgiving for this event and for each person who has already signed up; for the venue and the help we have received thus far;
- For prepared hearts – the speaker, each participant and each helper;
- For the material and content to be shared, for certainty regarding the Lord's will in this.
- For good weather
- For safety and timely arrival for those travelling
- For a great move of the Spirit during the Retreat and for changed lives
- Any other matter that the Lord might bring to your mind as needing His provision/blessing.

Thanks so much for your continued partnership. May the Lord also meet your every need in Christ Jesus.

Because our Lord cares

*Dhan & Dolly*

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## Serving the Lord in Zimbabwe

August 2022

Dear Partnering Friends,

Greetings from a much warmer Harare, where the fury of a very cold winter seems to have passed. Hopefully, the ensuing summer would not be as extreme as some other parts of the world.

### RETREAT UPDATE

Last month, we wrote to you regarding the upcoming Discipleship Retreat. You prayed and the Lord blessed in so many ways. Some of you sent us brief emails and WhatsApp messages of encouragement and prayer support. For this and your other expressions of love, we give thanks to our Heavenly Father and to you our dear "fellows in the same ship".

One of our prayers was that the Lord would send only those whom He wanted to attend. Of the twelve confirmed "sleep-ins", only seven turned up. Two of them were not able to attend due to illness and death of family members. The ten "walk-ins" became only two. But we concluded that those who presented themselves were those whom the Lord had sent. Of course, the smaller number also facilitated more intimate communication and discussion which we considered a bonus.

Four years ago, we had set up a "What's App" chat group intending that Retreat participants would thereby have a platform from which they could share insights from their further meditation of the retreat material, or what the Holy Spirit had been saying to them by way of encouragement, rebuke, correction, etc. but it never really served its purpose.



*Some of the attendees*



*A ride into the City*

However, following this recent retreat, and totally against cultural norms, there has been very insightful and fruitful discussions. So, we are extremely excited to report that the Holy Spirit is at work and that the 'retreat' is not over yet! Oh, how we praise the Lord for what is happening and pray for quality, lasting and abundant fruit from this event.

We thank God, too, for gifts of dressed chicken, freshly baked almond and cranberry biscotti, oat pecan and raisin crunchies, transportation to take the attendees to the venue from the city and vice versa at the end of the Retreat. Most of all, we thank God that you did not take lightly our requests for prayer. He certainly has answered and continues to honor your requests.

### HEALTH

Sometime ago, we mentioned to you that Dhan had been experiencing pains in his thighs. An MRI showed a problem in his lower spine. Despite fortnightly physiotherapy, and other interventions the pains have become more intense and almost incessant. Last week, he saw an orthopedic surgeon (a renowned spine specialist) who sent him to do an evaluation of his health with a view to possible mildly invasive intervention in the spine. We are presently awaiting the results of the Physician's evaluation which can be any day now.

We have not yet decided on what course to take and dare not rely on common-sense or worldly wisdom. So, we are kindly asking that you for join us again in seeking the Lord's favor and His will in this.

Thank you so much, dear Friends. We deeply appreciate your devotion to the Lord and your faithfulness to us and His work.

Praise & Thanksgiving:

- We thank God for carrying us through the Retreat
- For all those who prayed us through this event
- For the attendees and the great times of sharing and interaction
- For the continued interaction on the WhatsApp group
- For those who gave their time, transportation and donated food items.

Please pray for:

- clarity and for the Lord's leading regarding the way forward for Dhan's spinal issue and provision of every need
- Joy, our missionary friend, now at medical school who is facing a monthly shortfall because of
- Covid and inflation
- Consistency for the individuals and groups that we are working with in their walk with the Lord.

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