



You Never Miss the Water Till the Well Runs Dry

We should be reminded of those things we take for granted. Unfortunately there are millions in the world today who are denied easy access to clean water. In Genesis, the wells that Jacob dug were essential for the survival of his flock and of his people. Even in the New Testament, Jacob's well was a functioning source of water providing for the needs of the community as well as for the needs of passing strangers. It is a travesty that, after 3000 years, many are still unable to access clean water.

In a village fifty kilometers east of Lusaka (Zambia), subsistence farmers have been allocated small plots of about five acres on which they erect mud brick houses and live off of the land. Life revolves around food, water and shelter, as well as the effort to raise a little income for essentials like soap, sugar, salt, blankets and other basic necessities. This is the typical way of life for the many thousands of subsistence farmers across the country.



Lusombo and Julie - overjoyed

Some time back, we reported that many Christian families living in the area were in need of boreholes, that is, they were in need of new wells by which they could access water. We are pleased to report that, through the generosity of the Lord's people, we have been able to respond successfully.

Lusombo and Julie are a couple in their fifties. They have eight children and many dependents. They attend the small Christian assembly in Munyeu, a five kilometer walk through the bush from their home which is located seven kilometers from the main road. Access by vehicle to their plot is difficult at best and during the rainy season, which lasts from November to March, the track is impassible. (Bicycles would be a great help).

Their nearest water supply is over two kilometers away at a small clinic. The water, which is collected daily by the women and children, is used sparingly for cooking and washing. When we arrived at their small house and informed them that we had come to drill a borehole, their excitement was overwhelming. They cried, sang, and even danced for joy. What seems so simple and basic to us, for Lusombo and Julie, was about to become life changing.



Striking water

They are hardworking people. Their hands are chaffed and their feet are like leather - shoes are just for Sundays. They made a living growing sweet potatoes, maize, cotton, and groundnuts. Sadly, however, they informed us that the company which sponsored the cotton program had reneged on their promise and were now offering only half the price they had originally agreed. This is typical of a supply chain in which losses are passed down the chain to those at the source. Unfortunately, these are the people who can least afford to bear the loss.

After a hazardous journey through the bush, the thirty ton drilling machine arrived to great amazement among the villagers. When water was finally struck at fifty-five metres, cheering and clapping rang out across the fields. With tears in his eyes, Lusombo gathered the people to the rear of his small house and asked them to kneel. He then prayed and gave thanks to God for his goodness in providing such blessing.

Once the hand pump was installed, we took our leave laden with gifts of sweet potatoes, pumpkins, and a live chicken. It was a rewarding experience and one which reassures us that our efforts are worthwhile. Our particular thanks go to those who have helped in a practical way. We pray that the Lord will continue to bless.

Widows in Need

Vera, Chibangu and Teresa.

We had the opportunity, during the recent visit, to meet these three dear ladies who live at the rear of the Makeni Gospel Hall. All are widows in their seventies. Following a report in an earlier newsletter, some sisters in the UK donated monetary gifts for these ladies.

When we visited them and saw their poor living conditions we felt humbled. Asked what their main concerns were they said, "food and a little soap to keep ourselves clean". Teresa then showed us what she was going to cook later; there were a few leaves drying on a tin drum along with some okra and a few pumpkin seeds. This meagre assortment was her meal.

Their toilet was a small grass shelter; when asked if they couldn't have something better they said they were too old to dig a proper latrine. It became apparent on our visit that the elderly, in particular those without families, are ignored and forgotten.

We asked what we could do to help. They said that if we could provide roofs for their houses to keep them dry in the rainy season that would be good. It is the least we could do to grant



Vera, Chibangu and Teresa outside one of their homes

their request. Before we left we passed instructions to one of the elders to arrange for the work to be done.

The elders live close by and while some of their houses are not in much better condition we did remind them of their obligation to take care of the widows and to make sure they had sufficient food.

We will follow up with a brief update in our next newsletter

Mrs Sondoyi

We reported in our last newsletter about the plight of a dear widow from Chawama. Mrs Sondoyi lost all her stock when her market shop was broken into. We are thankful to those who responded to the report by donating money to assist this dear sister.

She is the sole breadwinner for fourteen dependents and a hardworking woman with a good testimony. We saw her the Sunday before we visited the shop but didn't mention that we were planning to visit her to pass on a gift. When we called her from outside the market compound - it is not a place to wander if you don't know where to go - she came to meet us and led us through the labyrinth of traders to her small stall. She then relayed what had happened and how she was now scraping to earn something for her family as well as trying to pay back the money for the goods which had been stolen as they had been purchased on credit. All she had in her shop was a few Chitengi's. Her daily net sales were about K16,000, equivalent to about £2.



She spoke of burdens within her family. Her daughter of sixteen became pregnant last year. This daughter has epilepsy and the new baby was also been diagnosed with the same condition. When we told her we had a gift to try to help her rebuild her shop, she was overcome with gratitude. Once we gave her the money she said she intended to use some of it to get both her daughter and her daughter's baby scanned at the hospital in order to see if there was anything that could be done to help. She said that brain scans were not provided for those with epilepsy and that she would have to pay.

We prayed and left her. We trust that the Lord will bless her and also bless those who responded to her need.

Prince Ngoma

Prince is one of the founding elders at Munyeu. He is a good man who has worked hard to build up the small assembly. When we heard he was sick we decided to pay him a visit. He spends most days in bed suffering from pains in his head and legs. The clinic said he has high blood pressure for which they have prescribed medication and referred to the Out Patients section of Lusaka General Hospital. His fields look neglected compared to normal. His oldest son has left to join the police force so most of the burden has fallen on his wife. Please pray for our dear brother and sister.



Peanut Harvest

We are pleased to report that the weather conditions this year have been favourable and that farmers are reporting a good harvest. We are also pleased to report that the peanut farmers we sponsored as part of an out-growers scheme are also now harvesting their crops. We won't know, until all the crops have dried, just how the yields will compare with our projections. Initial reports suggest that yields are slightly down due to a combination of circumstances. Many of the farmers are growing groundnuts for the first time and we were disappointed that training, promised by local agricultural agents, never materialized. We have also learned that the addition of lime in certain areas would have significantly improved the output. These are lessons we intend to document in our final report so we can improve things in future years.

The good news is that the harvest will be significant and the price that we have agreed to pay to buy back the produce is considerably higher than the market price. We are therefore sure that the farmers will not lose and that they will be rewarded for their efforts.

For those who don't know how groundnuts grow, we have included some pictures below showing a groundnut bush with the nuts themselves growing from the roots. When the nuts are ready to be harvested, the bushes are pulled out and piled up. The women, with their children and all, then come and pick the nuts from the roots. Once collected, they are spread out in the sun to dry for about four to six weeks. Once dried, they are ready for shelling. A shelling machine has been installed in Mambilima and Makeni to avoid the laborious task of shelling by hand. The nuts are then bagged, weighed, sealed, and tagged in fifty kg bags.

After harvesting, there is still a scattering of nuts left on the ground. These are collected by the children for their own use – 'the handfuls of purpose in Ruth'.

Once there is a sufficient amount for a lorry load - between twenty-five and thirty tons - the nuts will be collected and the farmers will be paid.

The small processing plant at Makeni is almost ready for production. The machinery has been tested and we have produced our first samples of peanut butter. The quality is good and we are now waiting for the necessary paperwork to certify us for food production. The people at the plant are excited and looking forward to full production. It will provide full-time and part-time employment for a number of people – just how many we can't yet say. A more detailed report on the plant will be in our next newsletter. Just to say that the plant is a 'not for profit' operation and all profits will be recycled into other projects. The current plant also needs additional investment so that it can become reasonably profitable – we are currently trying to raise funds for a backup grinder and a small delivery van.

We will use the lessons learned from the out-growers scheme to determine what to do in the coming season. We are especially interested in hearing the feedback from the farmers in particular. We are keen to know whether they feel the scheme has contributed significantly to improving their conditions. The report will be completed by August so that we can raise the necessary funding for next season.



Harvesting



Drying



Shelled and ready for roasting

Visiting the Orphans



A special gift for an orphan and the needy family

We visited all the children during May and made payments for the next school term. Photographs were taken and records will be updated in the next few weeks.

We have had mixed feedback from the visits, good news of those who had passed to the next grade and also sad news of others who had dropped out. Another girl of 14 had fallen pregnant. Her guardian abandoned her and we are not sure of her circumstances. Most recently, it was reported that she is being forced to live with the boy who impregnated her. The girl, herself, is just a child and it grieves us to here of such situations. This is just one of the challenges that these vulnerable children have to face.



Orphans at Munyeu with their school reports

Outreach Work in Eastern Province

Samuel Kapanji and Peter Chola, our mechanic, were in the Eastern Province in June visiting the rural regions around Chipata preaching and teaching the Gospel. Peter has reported a need for Nanja Bibles. In some places they only have one Bible among dozens. Unfortunately, Nanja Bibles are relatively expensive and are unavailable locally in Chipata. They can be purchased in Lusaka but cost about £4 each.

We will try to help when we have the means. We are also contemplating setting up an out-growers scheme in the

Eastern Province where, for years, they have been accustomed to growing groundnuts.

There are two ways, therefore, of providing Bibles. We can either donate money to buy them, or we can help the farmers earn money so they can afford to buy the Bibles

Special Needs

Prayer requests:

- For the trustees and workers, that we will have the wisdom and understanding to carry out our responsibilities in a way that honours the Lord and benefits his people.
- That the out-growers scheme will be successful and that we will be able to expand it next year to other regions.
- That the peanut plant will be successful and that it will grow to provide funding for other projects
- That the Orphan Program will grow so that we have sufficient numbers to justify the administration overhead
- That we can provide help to the many assemblies that are looking for assistance to repair or develop their premises

Material and Financial

- The old Landrover Discovery is on it's last legs. It has done over 200,000.
- Although we already have the funds to buy the peanuts from the farmers on our Program we need to another 70 ton to make the plant profitable. Cost is £30,000.
- Funding to expand the program next year. The farmers on the last program already have the seed for next year. Each additional farmer requires seed, sprayers, subsidies etc at a cost of £800. We hope to add another 30 members.
- Bicycles would be a great help to people in rural areas,.
- Another borehole for the families east of Mboshu where Mr Njovu lives. Cost is £3000
- Nanja Bibles for Eastern Province.

We thank all who support us prayerfully and practically in this ministry

*For the administration of this service not only supplieth the want of the saints, but is abundant also by many thanksgivings unto God;
2 Cor 9:12*

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