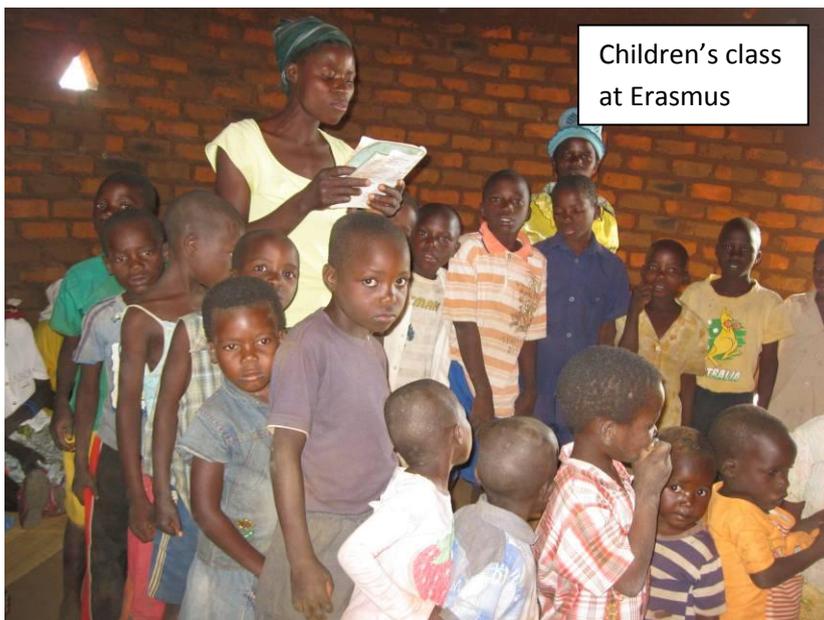


 Our  Work for the Lord in Southern Africa -- May 2012

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We just finished trip two to Zimbabwe before our trip to the USA. None of the congregations we visited on this trip are receiving drought relief because they are in a part of Zimbabwe where they receive better rainfall. Therefore, on this trip, we did not receive any more letters from congregations regarding drought relief. Our third trip is planned for May 28 – June 9. After that trip I expect to be able to give more details about drought relief.

The first place we went to was Mujihva village near Chiredzeni. A sister who heard the gospel at Erasmus had been asking for help to start a congregation in her village; and about 6 months ago, Elias went there and began a new work. The headman of the village attended my class the first day. That night there was a death in the village and so, as is the custom in small rural villages, the whole morning was spent by all the villagers preparing for the funeral. The mother of the woman who passed away had attended Linda's classes, so we also went to convey our condolences and attend the funeral. The village head told me that I could preach for 30 minutes and that I was free to invite all to attend our evening service. I used Paul's outline in Acts 24 when he stood before Felix: righteousness, self-control and the judgment. While we were busy burying this woman in a physical sense, Elias was busy burying two women in a spiritual sense who had come from another village to hear the word of God and thus did not have to attend the funeral. That night more people than usual came to hear the word of God. The next morning, when we expressed to the brethren our regret that we could not teach them the day before, they said, no, they were very happy because the whole village saw something they had never seen before – a white man showing love to an African grieving family, and they feel it will open many doors for the gospel.

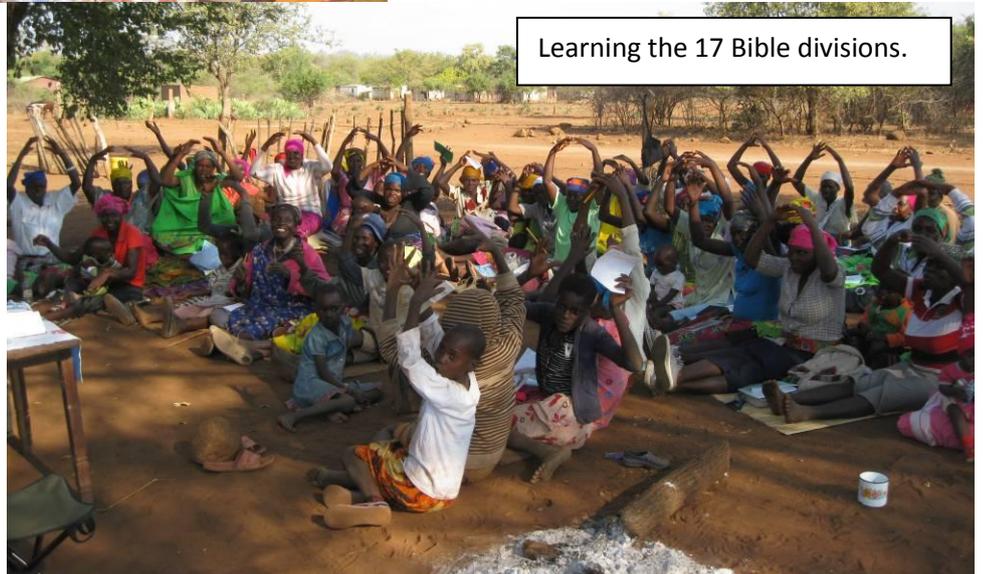


Children's class at Erasmus

The next day we travelled to Erasmus. Five obeyed the gospel, but I did not stay to witness the baptism. It was getting dark and I wanted to come back to the camper (2 kms away) to prepare for my evening lesson. The brethren asked me if I could find my way back as there are many different paths to take. I told them it was no problem, and it wasn't – I just followed my own unique footprints. This reminds me of 1 Peter 2:21 where Peter says that "Christ also suffered for us, leaving us an example, that you should follow his *steps*." (One of the Greek meanings for this word is "footprint.") The congregation at Erasmus is a little over a year old and appears to be growing. One mother is putting in a lot of effort to teach the children. At each place

Linda and I spent time periodically teaching the 17 Bible divisions, and each evening I showed some ancient Jules Miller filmstrips (Patriarchal and Mosaic Ages) using a 12V projector and a car battery I recharged with a solar panel. The brethren seemed to be especially excited about those lessons.

After two days we went to Turf. They invited us -- we never go to a place unless we are invited. It is down one of the worst roads in Zimbabwe. We crawled along at about 20 mph. We had a nice

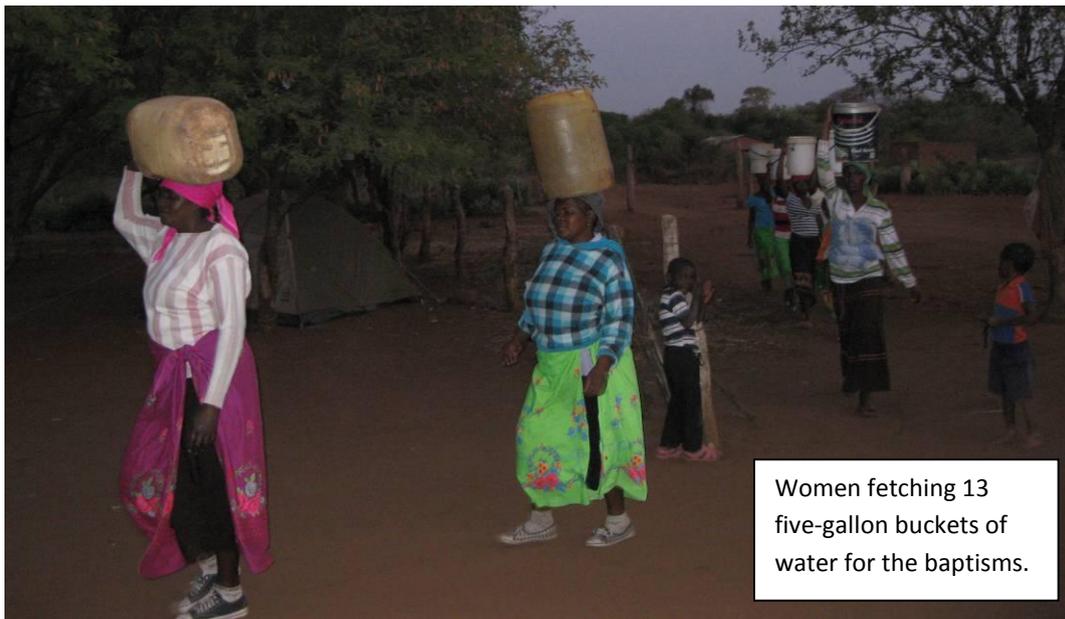


Learning the 17 Bible divisions.

warm welcome and taught there for three days. While there we observed something that caused us to ask questions, and on our second day we discovered that a man whom I will call "Diotrephes," the owner of the property on which the church meets, is a polygamist. When I approached him (it took a day to go through the culturally appropriate channels), with my translator as a witness, he accused me of being a disrupter of homes (because my wife and I had taught about polygamy on a previous visit – and Linda taught about it again this time because the women requested it). He informed me that there are many polygamists in the surrounding congregations as well as at Turf and asserted that without his blessing I would not be welcome at any congregation in the area. We were due to go to where three of these congregations would be gathered the next day, and so I said, "Come and tell them what you have told me." I also wanted Isaac, another man I often work with and whom I use as a translator, to witness what he was saying.

The next morning at 10, after spending an hour in the middle of the "road" changing my fuel filter, we arrived at a new place called Maxakana. About a dozen men from Turf, Valley, Malibangwe and Daffy congregations were present, including a number of polygamists. After a two-hour meeting with Diotrephes (at which I was not present), the men invited Linda and I to give separate Bible classes on repentance. Linda and I, of course, used polygamy as examples of repentance. I started with Matthew 19 and divorce, and what a divorced man must do to repent. "Ish, ish, ish" and much tongue-clicking. Then I used Ephesians 5 (if Christ can have more than one body/church, then a man can have more than one body/wife) and 1 Cor.7:2. Some had trouble reasoning from Ephesians 5, but no one had trouble understanding that if there were 3 men and 1 woman they did NOT each have their own wives! And then....vice-versa. "Ish, ish, ish" and more tongue-clicking.

The home where the Maxakana meeting was held belongs to a man I had taught last year at Turf. He wanted to be baptized then but I was unwilling to do it because he told me he had two wives and he was unwilling to repent. After



Women fetching 13 five-gallon buckets of water for the baptisms.

this repentance lesson he came to me and told me that he had put away his second wife (although he still supports her) and was now ready to be baptized. This was a great encouragement to me, and he and two other women obeyed the gospel that afternoon. Another polygamist came up to me and told me that he now understands and he will put away his second wife. Another one told Elias the same thing, but of course we will

have to wait to see what they do. The next day, among other things, I taught an even harder lesson on 1 Corinthians 5 – that polygamists who refuse to repent should be put out of the church. I stressed that love must be the motivation, and congregations who do not do this are proud. When I came back from tea break, one brother asked, "What is this about 'not eating'?" That led to a lot more "ish, ish, ish" and tongue-clicking. All the time I was not teaching, Diotrephes was speaking to the men – until late into the night – trying to persuade them to have nothing more to do with me. After the men went to bed, he went to Elias's tent and further berated him. One of the things he told Elias is that his wife must not be a good wife – that is why he only has one! It is hard to know what will happen (African people are generally too polite to be rude to a guest), but it seems to me that many have good hearts. However, a village head has much influence. Elias and Isaac will continue to go there (if they are allowed), and we pray that truth will triumph. Despite the stress at times, we enjoy being able to work for the Lord very much and hope to receive an invitation to return some time.

**Our trip to the USA** is now less than one month away, and we are trying to put together some kind of schedule. With the exception of the congregations listed below, we have seen all congregations who support us in the past 2 years and so we do not plan to make special plans to be with them again this time. However, we are happy to visit any

