

Interview with Matabeleland Pastor

Written by Administrator

Sunday, 02 July 2017 11:49 - Last Updated Sunday, 02 July 2017 11:49

What time do you get up and what time do you go to bed?

My prayer time is 3 – 4.30 am. Then I go back to bed and get up at 6.30. I go to bed at 10 pm.

On average how many people come to your home every day seeking help?

12-15 people, and many telephone calls!

How many people are you feeding?

We were feeding up to 1800 families 10 kg of maize porridge per month with help from Zimbabwe Victims' Support Fund, Zimbabwe Partnership Trust and Barnabas Trust but now we have only 630 bags to distribute.

Just how dependent on the relief food you are distributing are the people?

Totally. There are many families that if we don't give, have no food. Many are very desperate.

What is the mood of the people?

They are sad, very depressed. The only time they are happy is when they receive food from us.

How are they surviving?

They are trying to grow food for themselves but for those who got a harvest, it will only last them three months.

How are you getting funding?

Zimbabwe Victims' Support Fund has been supporting us for more than ten years and more recently Zimbabwe Partnership has helped and Barnabas Trust helped for two months. Ex Zimbabweans linked to local churches also give from time to time.

Are there any other agencies distributing food to the hungry in the areas you and your team cover?

In some areas Barnabas Trust gave, but only for two months. Last year the government

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distributed food in some areas. These were one-offs when a politician came for a visit.

Has the recent harvest improved their situation?

In some areas it has, like Lupane and Nkayi. They will be able to feed themselves for 3-4 months.

How open are they to receive the Gospel?

They are very open. Many come to church to get food but by God's grace we teach them and they grow in faith. But I need to train more people to teach and would welcome teaching material and trainers. It is not always easy to identify the right people to lead; it takes time.

How many new converts have you and your team of Pastors introduced to Jesus, say in the last 6 months?

In April 52 were baptised, June 44, and more recently 47. However there are more in the outlying areas like Binga and Beitbridge which I do not have numbers for.

What have you noticed happening in Zimbabwe recently?

There is a lot of witchcraft going on around Zim as well as in the church. The reason is because of suffering due to the economy collapsing.

Most businesses have closed down and people can't get jobs so can't get money to pay their bills, or buy food, or school fees, or get treated for their illnesses. There is a high level of corruption and as a result people seek the services of false prophets and nyangas (traditional healers).

There is a group of intercessors at Nkulumane. The pastor's son (6) was stolen. The intercessors began to pray and alerted us to pray when the child had been missing for two days.

The person who had kidnapped the child also stole three other children. On the third day he was travelling in his car, on the way to South Africa, when it broke down. He asked for help from three male passersby and one of them (related to the pastor) recognized the missing child. They asked where the boy was going to and they became aggressive with the driver and even threatened to kill him. The driver pleaded with them to allow him to phone his boss in South

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Africa and the South African offered them USD20,000 if they promised not to report the case. However the men phoned the police, who came out and took the man in and towed the car to the police station.

The number of the South African was also given to the police. The boys were all returned safely to their families.

Sadly we cannot be sure the police will take action as they are greedy for money.

In the newspaper it was reported that a girl (15) was found in a state of decomposition with body parts missing. Four families came to claim the body hoping it was their child.

Also in many churches leaders are focusing on miracles and healing for which the congregation have to pay.

What is the most difficult part of your job?

Originally my focus was simply to bring people to salvation through Christ. But now there is a suffering that people are going through because they don't know the Lord.

Jealousy is widespread among families because they cannot meet their basic needs, especially if one part of the family has children supporting them from outside the country. Because the needs are so great people are just looking out for themselves and neglecting other relatives.

Married couples are breaking up bitterly and often the children are deserted. I have many times tried to bring some new street kids back to the family but often the parents don't even want them. The children say they are happier to be away from the relatives.

Very old people are also deserted by the family members who leave and never send anything for them. I have many grandparents now.

Another thing that is difficult for me is children dying from malnutrition; up to five a month. At the cemetery in Luveve the ground is spreading with children's graves. According to traditional beliefs if a child is less than three months the women are expected to bury the child, especially very elderly women. This is very difficult to watch. These things keep us on our knees.

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How do you keep going?

People help and encourage me: my mentors and my pastors and the people in the churches who pray for me. I still desire to obey the Lord's call. God's grace is sufficient and he sustains me. I love people and I really like to talk to them and understand their problems and pray for them. I have seen situations changed for the people, and in my own life, as God has worked.

How many kms do you travel in an average week on kingdom work?

500 km at least.

When did you last get a break of a few days away from the demands of ministry?

Two years ago.

Do you ever despair?

Yes. My child has just started school and fees are a problem. Prices of general goods have gone up. I worry that I might get sick and not be able to do my work.

What difference does it make to know your brothers and sisters in Christ 6000 miles away are holding you and your ministry up in prayer?

I get very, very encouraged to know that people are behind me. I do have problems but I know I am being uplifted.

Would you like to say a sentence or two to them?

I really thank you from the bottom of my heart. Without your support this ministry would not be going. We don't have buildings but many churches and these people are fed by you.

Food relief, teaching materials, prayers, phone calls from pastors overseas all build me up and keep me and our church going.

Through all this I see the grace of God.

I don't deserve all these things. God bless you all for your part in the Kingdom.