

Greetings! and a very happy Christmas to all our friends, supporters and well wishers from the Lees and the Christians here in Zimbabwe.

Christmas is going to be a bit subdued for us this year. There is still a lot of lawlessness and uncertainty in the whole country. In the Province of Matebeleland, where we live, there is a lot more calm than elsewhere in the country, but there is still an undercurrent of uncertainty prevailing. Some say this is just the calm before the storm, we hope and pray not.

One thing this situation in Zimbabwe has reinforced for us is that there is no peace, no hope, no future in anything of this world; only in Jesus is there peace and hope and future. In I John 2:15-17 we read, *"Do not love the world or anything in the world. If anyone loves the world, the love of the Father is not in him. For everything in the world -- the cravings of sinful man, the lust of his eyes and his pride in possessions -- comes not from the Father but from the world. The world and its desires pass away, but the man who does the will of God lives forever."* (NIV)

John sums it up very well in those few verses. Our problem is that when things go too well for too long we begin to forget that our hope is definitely not in or of this world but in Jesus only. Just meditating on such Scriptures has such a calming and satisfying effect on us when things get a bit intense. How terrible to be a non-Christian.

There are a couple of situations that we would ask you to pray about in particular. The one is that we have had a platoon of army wandering around our property and other properties in the near vicinity. They have not directly threatened us, but their very pres-

ence is a threat and is obviously designed to be. They are fully armed and in battle gear. They have been having very intimidating shoots with automatic rifle fire and grenades, etc. going off in the middle of the night very near our home and a number of tribesmen have been beaten up in one of the areas where we have churches. So far no Christians have been directly affected.

Also, a man who was employed by us has been spreading rumors in the villages around about that we have an arms cache of up to twenty firearms hidden in the hills on our property. I went to the police as soon as I heard about this and this man was questioned by them at length. He denied everything, but the police told me that it was just as well that I came to them before they heard from other sources as anything like this is viewed in a very serious light.

Well, enough of the bad news. Our spirits are high; we trust in the Lord. There are bad moments, but nothing a little faith and prayer cannot dispel.

Aids in Zimbabwe is seemingly out of control. People are dying by the hundreds every month, but people just don't seem to care. It is almost as if they have a death wish. There are thousands of aids orphans -- so many that the normal agencies are just not able to cope. BZCM has been looking at ways of trying to help without becoming totally bogged down in just taking care of these orphans.

Unfortunately, most care agencies who place these kids into orphanages become overwhelmed by numbers and all kinds of evils begin to creep in -- drugs, prostitution and theft destroys young lives.

BZCM, after much prayer, thought and discussion with church leaders in the indig-

enous churches, has decided the best way we can help is to encourage the extended family to take care of these orphans and then we will step in and subsidize these families with food, clothing and school fees.

We have done a census among the churches to find out how many families need assistance. The census will be an ongoing exercise so that no one gets missed out. Logistically we can only manage this among our church members in Binga, nSwazi and Filabusi, but I can see that this could become quite a significant part of our work very soon.

Because of the very high cost of roofing timber and material, all of the churches we work with and who have built buildings, have opted to put thatch roofs on. This is for free -- it just requires labour to cut it and put it on. The church at Makoba roofed their buildings in this way. About a month ago the local council decided to come and see what was going on at the church because they had heard good reports from people not even connected with the church about all the good work Makoba Church of Christ was doing in the community.

The list was long -- choir practice, Bible study for anyone who cared to attend, sewing classes, craft work classes, well baby classes and, every day there was a preschool for small kids whose parents were busy in the fields all day. All of these activities were for anyone and for free -- part of the outreach programme of the church.

The end result was that the Council for nSwazi was so impressed by the Christian community spirit that they gave them, as a free grant, enough timber, sheeting, and nails to redo the roof and make it more permanent and less of a fire hazard. We think that is fantastic, and a clear indication of how the indigenous

church, if allowed to be independent and self sufficient, will rise to any occasion and succeed without the missionary always having to foot the bill. Well done, the Christians at nSwazi.

We hope and pray that you will have a joyful and happy Christ-filled Christmas this year. Our Christmas will be quiet -- Debbie and I; Gayle, who will be home from college in England; and Debbie's sister from South Africa. Derek and Corne and their two sons will be in South Africa for Christmas with Corne's parents. Zane and Megan will also be in South Africa with her family.

Once again, thank you for your love, prayers and support. I look forward to seeing most of you in February and March of 2001 as I travel to the U.S. God bless and keep you and have a great Christmas. We love you.

Richard & Debbie



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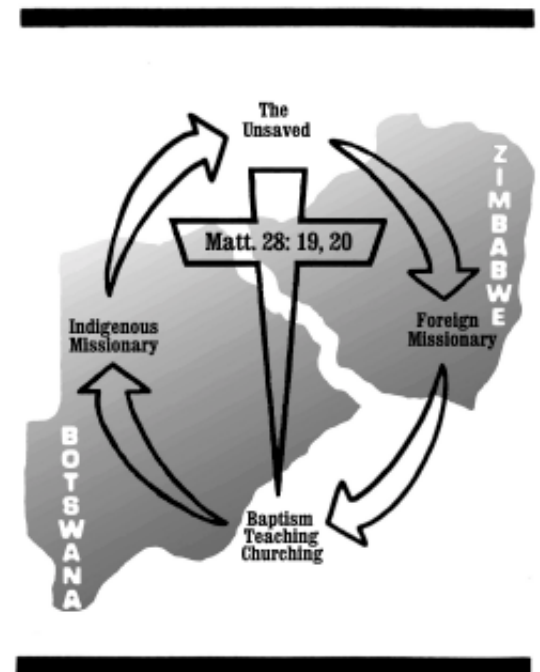
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Greetings From Botswana, Zimbabwe, and the Lees



Botswana Zimbabwe Christian Mission

BCE Field Operations 1992

	Jan.	Feb.	Mar.	Apr.	May	June	Totals
Congregations							
Salaries	714	549	815	568	704	934	4282
Rent/Utilities	91	251	516	49	195	186	1288
Construction	84	-----	134	420	623	325	1586
Special Assistance	139	254	33	43	247	-----	716
Scholarship	48	191	76	155	21	78	569
Property	-----	238	198	509	340	350	1635
Administration							
Office	82	49	35	224	59	36	485
Telephone	174	138	128	130	165	-----	735
Postage	24	-----	11	17	-----	22	74
Vehicles							
Fuel	198	604	410	361	439	250	2262
Maintenance	76	113	544	151	2832	433	4149
Insurance	-----	-----	-----	-----	233	464	697
Fund/Payments	513	1218	517	328	382	450	3408
Legal Expenses	-----	327	516	156	120	184	1303
Travel							
Hotel	-----	-----	-----	-----	-----	-----	-----
Bus/Toll/Etc.	-----	-----	-----	-----	-----	-----	-----
Meals	102	226	312	10	66	-----	716
Air Fares	-----	-----	-----	-----	850	1825	2675
Special Projects							
Pedro Afonso	-----	416	811	-----	463	331	2021
Terra block	1862	-----	-----	-----	-----	-----	1862
Misc.	-----	70	34	-----	62	23	189
Total Field Expenses	4107	4644	5090	3119	7801	5891	30,652
Dep. U.S. Field Acct.	4760	7670	3840	4500	4345	3445	
	(653)	(3026)	(-1250)	(1381)	(-3456)	(-2451)	(-2097)