

3-26-2020

### SEYMOUR

The brethren which were recently added to the Lords church are showing signs of growth in the Lord and all of them have been regularly attending both the bible classes and church services.

We are thankful that Zola has been there in the past three months. As much as his work leave is about to end but a role he played to strengthen and encourage the brethren in Seymour has been very magnificent. Singing classes that he had with the brethren has lifted the spirit of the brethren there up.

### KING WILLIAMS TOWN

The brethren here are doing very well. A 36 years old lady was baptized on Sunday the 8<sup>th</sup> March. She has been putting pressure on me to convert her husband who is a staunch Methodist. We have managed to secure bible classes with all her family on the Fridays afternoon. We are hoping that this will bear good fruit.

#### BIBLE CLASSES:

All our bible classes were going very well until the outbreak of Corona Virus in our country.

Our government has put much needed precautions to try and curb the fast spread of it. In the period of five day more than one thousand two hundred and seventy were reported to be infected. Two people died yesterday and there a fear that these numbers may drastically increase as people begin to show he signs of sickness.

Most of the numbers that are currently reported are the people who had been tested because they were exposed to those who were found to be infected with those who. The reality is that huge numbers might have not been discovered and surely, they are unintentionally infecting others.

A very scary case was the recent person who was found to be positive right in deep rural Transkie.

The biggest problem is ignorance about the virus more than anything else. The projections from our government is that 40 – 60% of the South African population maybe infected. With the poor conditions of our health system and ailing health facilities, everyone lives in fear.

I have called off all my bible classes in line with government precaution measures to curb the

spread of this pandemic. We don't know what will become of this but there is one thing I am certain of this thing is going to kill lot of people in our country. As things stand, it is a struggle to find basic things such as hands sanitizes and face masks. So many stores have saw a business opportunity and unfairly raised the prizes to abnormal levels.

I hardly sleep lately. I find myself waking up in the middle of the evening and look at my children wondering what can I possible do to ensure that they survive this. We trust Our God hoping that if we adhere to government precautinal measures we maybe survive this.

### GRATITUDE

Brethren let me extend my humble gratitude to you all for your support. I thank all the brethren who have been writing to us encouraging us to keep on spreading the gospel of Our Lord.

We would also like to thank all those who are supporting us financially. May our Lord keep on blessing you.

# King Williams Town

The church here in King Williams Town is doing very well. We are using all the means at our disposal to communicate and continue teaching Bible classes.

The Sunday services that we conducted over WhatsApp, Zoom and Microsoft Teams Meeting for those who manage to connect.

I have bought and distributed grape juice, bread, face masks and hand sanitizer for the brethren here in Zwelitsha, Seymour, Balfour and Bhisho. We are encouraging the brethren to meet as families and as two or three were they can but to be always cautious of keeping a social distance.

Lockdown restrictions have been reviewed and eased. I'm now able to visit brethren at their homes. It's kind of weird and at times painful for someone like me, who has built a very strong bond with the brethren to find myself having to talk with them, either while I'm in the car or over the fence. I'm so thankful though that all of us are very much aware of the gravity of the situation.

## The Church At Seymour and Balfour

I have opened WhatsApp group for the brethren there and it has become very fruitful and informative. I have offered an opportunity for Brethren to be able to raise genuine biblical based questions and comments.

I must agree that I have since found it very effective. I have also noticed that brethren are able to raise questions that might have been rather hard or little bit uncomfortable for some of them to raise on the face value.

The only obstacle for some is always the question of data unavailability and in some cases the signal problems. But we are making every attempt to ensure that we attend to all their questions.

We are a little bit worried about Balfour. Most of the brethren there are recent converts and still need a proper teaching to be rooted in truth. With higher rising numbers of infections in our country, specifically in our province, most of them are serious disadvantage. The most unfortunate part is that part is mostly poverty-stricken area. Smart phones can sometimes be some sort of a luxury.

We were very saddened to be told about the passing away of brother Jack in Seymour. He was 67 years old and always had ailing health problems. We were particularly worried that we could not be able to attend his funeral.

# Bible Classes

My Bible classes have somewhere greatly increased with people who show a good interest in studying their Bibles. Every evening I have virtual meetings with a variety of people who, I would say, had some doctrinal issues in their denominations. Of course some are joining with the aim of defending their denominational doctrinal errors. As they say, the truth will set us free. That how some of us were converted. We always thought we were right until we were taught the truth in love.

My Friday's class with the young men has been very interesting lately. Just before the lockdown I was steadily allowing the space to teach Bible classes in their respective areas with some guidance and constant observations so that they cannot mislead both themselves and those that they are teaching. I was deliberately doing this with a concerned that I'm growing up and I won't be always there. It always worries me that there is no one who comes up to show the passion for preaching the gospel no matter the cost.

My wife tells me that the number of participants in her women's Bible classes both on WhatsApp and Zoom have increased. I'm particularly happy about that and I have encouraged her to keep encourage them to teach their children in their homes as well.

The family Bible class has grown to be particularly interesting since my younger brother and my two cousins are here with us for the lockdown period. I always wanted to spend some time with my young brother since his baptism. I sometimes felt like he is not paying much attention on strengthening his growth in the full understanding on the faith in the Lord.

# Gratitude

Brethren, we are so very grateful for the financial support, for your prayers and words of encouragements.

I humbly apologize for late reports and inconveniences and promise that I'll do my utmost best to send all my monthly reports in time.

Thank you all once again for your patience and love.

*Thembinkosi Apleni  
June 1, 2020*

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**October - 2020**

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King Williams Town:

The brethren are rejoicing with the Nonki family, Nonkululeko Nonki (48) and her son Sibonelo Nonki (29) had their sins washed away on Sunday. Both had been earnestly attending the bible class I've been having with them since May 2019. My heart was filled with joy this on Sunday morning when they ask me to baptize them.

All the brethren here are still doing well. I'm particularly happy to see all the brethren involve in evangelical efforts here. We are preparing for an evangelical meeting that we will have in Bhisho on the first week of November.

Sister Ntombekhaya has fully recovered after the operation she under went three months back. I have asked them to remain with us until January next year.

Seymour:

The brethren at Seymour continue to be a great encouragement to all the brethren here. I'm now visiting that area once every week because we could identify opportunities of converting more souls.

In the area called Balfour, just 5 KM near Seymour, the five brethren there are now able to meet every Sunday to break bread. The evangelical meetings we had there have encouraged number of people to attend the Sunday services. We are continually visiting that area to edify the brethren and teach those who have agreed to have family bible classes with us.

At Katberg brethren we quite disturbed by the departure of brother Vuyo and Mcebisi to Cape Town. They were both a wonderful support to the Nqola family. Every time we visit Seymour we always make sure that we visit the brethren there to encourage them to keep the faith and to keep on encouraging their neighbors and friends to attend the classes that we often have there.

At Cangce, sister Nokuzola is doing a great job. Four ladies were baptized last month after our third bible class with them. We have encouraged them to carry on meeting to study teach other ladies. I was touched by a bed ridden disabled (21 years old) woman who asked me to baptized her. Even when we wanted to find a big bath to baptize her, she insisted that we take her to the river where we baptized others.

The group of people who attend our bible class there has increased, giving us a hope that we may be able to establish a stable church in that area.

#### Bible Class

It is so good to have out normal bible classes with all those that we are teaching, especially family bible class. We are hoping that this will result in opening more opportunities for us to reach more souls.

My Fridays bible class with the young men is doing very well. It is interesting to see some of the young men who attending this classes growing in the faith in our Lord.

The Wednesday bible class which include singing continue to be of great interest. This is one class that continue to draw so much interest from both the members of the church here and members of community in general.

We continue to have several informal classes both here and in other places where we got opportunities to do so. Most of our classes that continue to bear good results are mostly family bible classes. We continue to be very grateful to all the brethren who continue to open opportunities for us to spread the word of God.

#### Gratitude for Financial Support:

Brethren we are so thankful to you all for your prayers, the messages of encouragement and for supporting us financially.

We pray for God blessing for you and your families.

May our God bless you all.

NB. Our Financial support remains the same.



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**December 2020**

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### **King Williams Town**

The brethren are considering going back to meeting as family or small groups where possible because of the serious rise of Covid cases with many people dying on daily bases. We met this past Sunday with my wife's family mourning two lost members due to Covid. Brother Zwezwe has also lost his mother and brother Mthika also lost his mother's sister due to Covid.

During the service yesterday, I spoke about God's love during adversity, drawing inspiration from Lamentations 3: 22. Brethren are seeming to be both scared and despondent which I think have so much to do with most of us keeping on losing our loved ones. What is apparent is that so many people are living so carelessly as if we are not going through the pandemic. It is very painful for the brethren who live with extended families who do as it pleases them without considering the lives of those who live them. The reality is that non of us expected the situation to be this bad after the was hope that the situation is becoming improving.

Our spirits were lifted by the baptism of sister Nosimpiwe Nkosi (36) and her daughter Nolonwabo (18), who both requested me to baptize them after the service yesterday. We rejoice with them. Both were attending the Sunday service for the second time and had been studying with my wife.

Mr. Nkosi requested that we start Bible studies with his family every Monday evening. We are hoping that this may result on him following in the steps of his family.

The church here in King Williams Town is growing and it is so good to see that after the work that we have been doing here for the past several years the word of the Lord is beginning to yield good results. Yes, there are obstacles that really haunt me, like a meeting place that would belong to the congregation here and young men who would take preaching the gospel of Christ seriously and be prepared to go through whatever it takes. But we are praying and trust that at the right time things would fall into place.

### **Seymour, Balfour and Cangece**

Last week we buried Zola's mother. She has been another Covid victim from my family. I had to attend and preside at her funeral. It really did not sit well with Zola and he is still not coping but the brethren have been very supportive.

We have discontinued meeting as groups around Seymour because of the very high numbers of Covid infectious around there. That area is rural and a very poverty-stricken area. The health facilities are extremely bad. Roads are too bad to reach some areas easily which makes the situation a bit more concerning.

I have been visiting brethren individually or as neighbors for those who live closely to each other for Bible classes and to encourage them to hold onto the gospel of our Lord. It is very encouraging to see how brethren around Seymour are dedicated to the cause of gospel.

We have started the studies in book of Acts. We decided to do the same studies for all of them around there so that when we finally get over Covid, all of them maybe at the same level of understanding.



At Cangce I have baptized a young intelligent man, Lonwabo Ngqeleni (23), a friend of his Bible. My WhatsApp has not seen rest ever since I met him. I know I had to deal with lot of his questions from the passage he had studied everyday. I'm extremely happy to have him there, I was really worried about the women there who had to deal with lot of issues on their own.

I'm a bit worried about the brethren at Katberg. A man who is my contact there has not been reliably reachable lately. He has been complaining of his phone signal but the brethren there are complaining of his often disappearance. I had a long chat with him on Wednesday about the festive pleasures which always leave good young men fallen from grace.



Preparing sandwiches for young men before our class

On Friday I spent a night at Balfour with the three brethren there who always lift my spirit. The love that they always display towards me and the truth, the debates that they always initiate with denominational preaches helps them to dedicate more of their time studying their Bibles.

#### **Bible classes**

Next year we are planning a series of Bible classes that would bring together the brethren here so that they may know each other and be able to edify one another. We are planning to invite brother Robin Bauer to facilitate such classes. We are praying for this Covid to go down as early as possible even though the indications are of a very opposite view.

I'm also planning to visit Eshowe early next year just to meet and study with the preachers there. It's been a while since I last visited them.

#### **Words of Gratitude**

Brethren I want to humbly send my word of gratitude to you all. It has been a long journey and you have been there with us. I know at times despondence took it's toll on me. Difficulties really took a knock at me and like Elijah, at times I felt like I'm alone here.

Truly, our God, Who, "heals the broken-hearted and bids up their wounds" (Psalm 147:3) will never forsake his servants. I count myself truly blessed to have you as my companions and fellow brethren in the Lord. I pray for multiple God blessings for you and your families.

#### **Financial Support**

Brethren I wish to make a plea to you. If you happen to know churches or brethren who could assist in sending us additional financial support, we would really appreciate that. We are in dire need of additional financial support. I have not requested any extra financial support in the past five years. So much has changed, prices have gone up so much.

I now can feel the lack in both providing for my family and executing some of my preaching duties. I humbly appeal for any help. Whether it be a once off or continuous, it will play a huge role.

Thank you once again brethren for being there for us.



Last month Bible class at Cangce.