



UPDATE from MUTARE



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*Delight in the Lord and He shall give you the desires
of your heart.*

Psalm 37:4

Newsletter
Vol. 24, No. 1
June 2009

Dear friends and family,

Jane: Delight comes in many different forms – sometimes hiding in unexpected places, or simply waiting unappreciated in familiar ones. I was on my way home from work recently when a line of children walking back to the farm from school saw me and ran up giggling and waving their report cards in the air. As I glanced at the A’s, B’s and C’s and comments of “wagona!” (You did it!), and then back at the expressions of delight in their faces, I felt thankful that these children can continue attending school in these difficult times. Life at home is perhaps not easy for some of them - but they have the ability to delight in the moment.

Earlier this month I was invited to speak at a ladies breakfast meeting. I was scared, but God’s message for the women was made very clear to me. Psalm 37 instructs us to *delight ourselves in the Lord*. That cold morning, as we drank hot tea and munched on muffins, we explored together what it means to *delight ourselves in the Lord*; in the special way He has made us, in His ways and plans for our lives and in what He is doing through His church in Zimbabwe. Our everyday circumstances and the reality of economic hardship all around us make this difficult at times, but that morning we asked God to give us daily a fresh understanding of what it means to delight in Him.

Larry: Our last newsletter was written in December- inflation at that time was no longer quantifiable, but a US dollar was worth 50 million Zimbabwe dollars. In February the economy was officially dollarized- the Zim dollar was no longer used (the highest denomination notes produced were Z\$100 trillion, and soon were worth far more on Ebay than in Zimbabwe), and hard currencies such as the US greenback became legal tender for all transactions.

The change dramatically altered people’s concept of money- they no longer felt they had to spend money as soon as they received it, before it lost value. Inflation has gone from the zillions (in Zim \$) to negative 3% (in US\$). So that part of the economy has stabilized. The banking sector has still not recovered

fully though- checking accounts and credit/debit cards are still not possible. Which means most transactions are still done in cash. I know of someone who bought a second-hand pickup for \$24,000 cash (a stack of 240 \$100 bills).

The ‘unity government’ has managed to get schools and hospitals operating again after beginning to pay teachers, medical staff and other civil servants US\$100 a month- far more than what their Zim\$ salaries were worth. And in most places the stores have goods for sale once more.

So Zimbabwe is functioning much more normally than six months before. But Morgan Tsvangirai’s trip to the US and Europe to request help to re-start the country’s economy has not been very successful. Obama and European leaders say that there needs to be more progress in terms of democracy and civil rights. President Mugabe, in power since 1980, maintains that he is protecting the sovereignty of the country and denies responsibility for the collapse of the economy.

Africa University, of course, continues to be a bright spot. At our 15th annual graduation ceremony early this month the security guards had their hands full trying (not always successfully) to keep elated family members from rushing the stage to give their newly-capped relatives massive bear-hugs. Such uninhibited joy and delight!



Robert and Marc,
two of our
Agriculture graduates

The sad note on graduation day was that the transition to a US\$ economy has made it difficult for some students to pay their tuition, and the scholarship fund

was not enough to meet everyone's needs. So, some were not able to graduate. Please consider contributing to the scholarship fund. Thanks to those who have already helped- it was a source of joy for us to see in the procession many who would have remained at home if they had not received help.

Jane: Last Sunday night I drove into town with Carly to attend 'street church' where children, adults, passers-by gather to listen to testimonies, hear God's word and sing and dance. When we arrived, a 14 year-old boy, Darlington, wearing a black T-shirt with 'Jesus walks' on the back was talking about how different his life was now that he knew Jesus. He was still on the street – but now, instead of getting into trouble, he was sharing the news of Jesus with other boys. Quite a number were there – at church in a dimly lit shelter - with him. It made us sad to think that he had not experienced the love and acceptance that growing up in a home can provide, but later the sadness was lost as we sang and danced (linking arms and spinning dizzy) in a celebration of changed lives, laughter, and praise for the God who rescues!

Those working closely with Darlington and others like him on the streets also lead the youth in our church, and had invited the youth group to come; it was touching to see young people from such varied backgrounds laughing and dancing together.

Larry: The new Monosem planter works so well- what a delight! We are harvesting the first crop of beans it planted. Thanks so much to all who helped with their gifts to make it possible!



FAMILY NEWS

Thanks for your prayers for **Michael's** schooling. He ended up staying at Hillcrest, his old school, with the

best teacher he has had there- and he enjoys school! Still, the highlight of his day is checking on his guinea pigs (he has given away a few, but only to people who promise not to eat them), and seeing if his bantam chickens have produced another egg.

Carly continues to excel in school and keep busy with sports- track and now field hockey. She has a good set of friends, both here and on Facebook.

Pule made Dean's list both semesters at Iowa State, and is spending his summer months with us here. He offered to do some volunteer work at Hartzell High School, the mission school near us- and was given two 10th grade biology classes to teach! Good for him!!

Ben is in Taiwan for his summer holidays, doing an internship with a cell phone company. He won't tell us exactly what he's doing but last we heard he is having a good experience there.

We ask for prayers for:

- guidance for us to know how best to reach out in Jesus' name where the needs are so great
- all who read this newsletter, that they may find delight in the Lord in their own lives

Once again, thanks so much to friends and family who help in many practical ways, and give us and others such encouragement through correspondence and prayer and support.

Yours and His,

Larry and Jane Kies

Advance Special numbers:

Project support: Please email me to find the current number, since we have applied for our own number.

Larry's salary support: 09572Z

Jane's salary support: 10739Z

Hardcopies of this letter are kindly sent by St Mark's UMC in Cedar Rapids IA. Please send address changes to them or directly to us.

For those with internet access, more information about the situation in Zimbabwe can be found on:

www.zimbabwesituation.com (note correction from the last newsletter)

www.herald.co.zw (which gives the government's view)