



UPDATE

from

MUTARE



Larry and Jane Kies
 Africa University
 Box 1320
 Mutare Zimbabwe
 email- LKIES@AFRICAU.AC.ZW

*Trust in the Lord and do good
 Dwell in the land and feed on his faithfulness.
 Psalm 36*

Newsletter
 Vol. 23, No. 3
 Dec 2008

Dear friends and family,

Yes, we are back in Zimbabwe!

This comes with heartfelt thanks for all the hospitality, warmth and encouragement over the last six months while we were away (special thanks to my sister Mona and her husband Rick, who once again made us feel so welcome as we made their home our home). Many people here have commented "You look great!" As we reflect on those months 'at home' we thank God for the many experiences that have strengthened and helped our whole family.

We've come back to a dry land, although this is supposed to be the rainy season. Many fields have been plowed, but as yet sufficient rains have not fallen for seeds to germinate. Food is in terribly short supply now...it is worrying to think there may not be a good harvest this year. Because of the shortage of food and the threat of drought, corn is now selling for about US\$30 a bushel when you can find it.

In town, we've been surprised to see a variety of groceries for sale...in shops selling in US \$. At the first store we had a bill of \$38.50- when we gave the clerk \$40, we were given change of ten South African rands and a packet of potato chips! Those who have dollars and rands can fill their shopping carts, and then at once feel guilty seeing the envy of others who wish they could fill a cart but have only Zimbabwe dollars. (In the 10 days we have been back, the unofficial exchange rate has jumped from Z\$2million:1US\$, to Z\$50million.)

Larry and I feel the challenge more than ever of 'What is our responsibility and response to be in a time of severe need and hunger?' Yesterday a lady from a nearby village came to our door saying she had not eaten for 2 days. We have no doubt there will be more people coming. What to do?

It HAS been good to see friends, and we feel humbled by the cheerful smiles of people who are going through impossible times.

In the dry countryside, acacia trees in full bloom decorate the brownish-red backdrop. It always amazes us that they bloom in *expectation* of rain, not as a *response* to that blessing of moisture. The tree in the logo of AU is an acacia, sending its roots deep, and is therefore able to not only endure periods of drought and hardship, but to blossom and bear fruit.

Psalm 36 tells us:

*Trust in the Lord, and do good
 Dwell in the land and feed on his faithfulness.*

*The Lord will help and deliver them
 Because they trust in Him.*

May that be true of AU as well during these harsh times. Operating the university has been extremely difficult, but at least they have remained opened and teaching.

We have not been directly affected by the recent cholera outbreak, but are extra cautious in our hygiene- and extra thankful for the excellent water and reliable electricity on campus.

The university had just closed after final exams, but we sat in on end-of-semester meetings. We know many students will struggle to pay their fees next semester- if you wish to help with the scholarship fund, funds can be sent to:

Africa University Development Office
 PO Box 340007
 Nashville TN 37203

The university farm is really struggling, with scarce and expensive feed, seeds and fertilizer. Our fund-raising for a new planter has almost reached the

goal. If you wish to help with that fund, when we have surpassed what we need for a planter, we will identify another piece of needed equipment, but will use the same Advance Special number.

FAMILY NEWS



Kies Family 2008- We were so happy to be together again!!!

BEN was proud to show us around Boston (where he is in his 3rd-year of college) on Thanksgiving weekend, just before we flew back. He is really excited about his computer programming class. He had a great summer experience in China.

Pule has settled in well at Iowa State University, despite a rough calculus course. He has started learning guitar!

CARLY happily went to school (which was closing for their long break) the day after we went back to see her old friends, and I presume to tell them of some of her new friends in the US.

MICHAEL just loved his 4th grade class in Jesup IA, but has also enjoyed being back. He has been having a great time playing with the boys in our neighbourhood on campus. He was SO excited to see snow the day we left Iowa.

We ask for prayers for:
-food aid to reach starving people

-a just resolution to the political turmoil that is largely to blame for the economic turmoil
-new and deeper faith among Christians in times of trial
-wisdom for us in deciding about Michael's schooling

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.

Have a Blessed Christmas!!!

Yours and His,

Larry and Jane Kies

Advance Special numbers:

Project support: 00392A (ATTN: Larry Kies for AU Planter fund)

Larry's salary support: 09572Z

Jane's salary support: 10739Z

Note: Some domains are again blocking our emails from our Lkies@africau.ac.zw address, so some people are now receiving hard copies again. Please use that address when emailing us since we don't have problems receiving email, and yahoo is much slower.

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.news24.com

www.thezimbabwesituation.com

www.herald.co.zw