

NIXON'S NEWS

David writes about his work at Chodort Training Centre and his additional involvement in the consistory:

Chodort Training Centre

At Chodort Training Centre we had a very good enrolment in January with 19 students in both Carpentry and Tailoring classes, while 32 students are currently completing the 6 month Computer Applications class. A further 32 students will begin the six month course in July.

Our constant challenge is our financial sustainability; we are seeking to offer training to our students at a cost which they can afford, if we charge the students what it costs to train them, they just could not afford to pay the fees.

This leaves us with the challenge of finding money to make up the difference. We are extremely grateful that we continue to receive financial support from our Christian brothers and sisters in Dortmund, Germany. We have also received support from CHAZ Churches Health Association of Zambia for this year's fees. This has allowed us to give fees support to 16 students. In addition we were able to raise some support for Chodort while on furlough in Ireland last year. We continue to rely on our carpentry and tailoring production unit to generate some income as well.



Students roofing Mrs. Munsaka's new home.

Longer Term Income Generation Activity

We have now embarked on a more long term income generation activity of building houses for rent. We have been looking forward since 2004 to the day when we would have title deeds to a new area of land on which we can develop Chodort Training Centre further. After years of prayer, frustration, phone calls and letters we started digging the foundations of two semi-detached houses on 1st February. We decided to start our development on the new plot by building 4 semi-detached houses which will be rented as soon as they are completed. We are hoping that this income along with more housing units which will be built in the future will give Chodort a better financial base.

However building is not easy here in Choma because the foundations have to be dug by hand, the stones for the concrete have to be broken by hand, then loaded onto a truck by hand, off loaded by hand then mixed with the sand and cement by hand! So it all takes a lot of time and patience.

We are delighted that all the equipment which we had received through the Container Ministry in Ireland is now being put to good use; the TATA pick-up truck, the dumper, cement mixer, pad vibrator, dumpy and spirit levels etc. We are using the concrete mixer to mix the concrete for the block-making machine and we are using these blocks for the houses. We are now putting the roof on the first two houses and this is an excellent practical exercise for the carpentry class. It's great that we can make our own doors and carry out all the carpentry work ourselves.

Church Activities

Over the past few months I have had a few amazing experiences in terms of worshipping God.

The first was speaking at a youth rally where around 600 young people met at Njase Secondary School for an overnight of worship, preaching and prayer. Listening to 600 young people singing and dancing enthusiastically is something that moves me to the very core of my being and at the same time knowing the challenges that they are facing and will face in terms of paying for their education. If they do manage to complete their education, there is then the challenge of getting work. Yet in spite of the problems (or maybe as a result of them?) there is a great desire to worship and follow God. The young people continued their rally during the night finishing up around 06:00 in the morning.

The second experience was preaching at another 'overnight' service. This time it was at St. Stephen's church where we worship as a family when I am not preaching in other Churches. This service was mostly attended by adults along with members from many different churches in Choma. The preachers were also from different denominations. The church was too small so we met outside. The pews were taken from the church, but there were about four times more people than seats so they sat on the grass. It was quite cold during the night but they remained, listening to the various preachers, singing, dancing and praying in between. To be in their presence, where every word you preach is listened to intently, is an unbelievable privilege.

The third experience was where I was asked to speak to the youth fellowship at St. Andrews congregation. Here there were about 40 young people, already praying when I arrived. The theme they asked me to speak on was, 'How to study the Bible'. Again their hunger was really uplifting, I gave some pointers, we had a lot of discussion where I was encouraging them to share their own knowledge and experience of studying the bible. We then broke into groups, each one studying the same passage and being amazed at how God spoke differently to each group.

Having such hunger and desire before me also makes me feel so inadequate and unworthy. As time goes on I feel more and more privileged to be with people who have such a desire for God to speak to them.

Rhoda writes about the compassionate ministry of the Orphan Committee in Choma Consistory:

Meet some of our orphans...

Collins is aged 16 years. He stays with his elderly Grandparents, both of his parents have passed away. His only brother also died in 2006. Collins wants to become an accountant. He has to do some piece work when he needs to buy something. For example he might be asked to hoe a garden, or clean a yard or surround to a house, or work in a field harvesting maize or tobacco. Last year Collins came 9th in his class of 46. He walks 3km to school each day, a total of 6km. Collins stays deep in the African bush, but he told me his teachers are committed to their lessons and students in this rural school and most of them are doing well and able to transfer to Choma in order to complete their education. As I listened to Collins, was the many challenges he faces living without his own immediate family. He is the one supporting his Grandparents as he told me he has lots of work to do at home as his Grandparents are not able any more. I pray and perhaps you might too that Collins will make his dream come true and that somehow he might indeed be able to gain the necessary grades and find sponsorship in order that he can study to be an Accountant.

Enny is 8 years old. Her father is bedridden and very ill with AIDS. Enny's brother was doing well at school but last year he decided to run away, he is very smart, but has since given up going to school. She is also a very smart girl with a beautiful smile. Enny is cared for by a stepmom, this often brings our children problems as they are not cared for with the same affection.



David is 13 years old though looks much smaller and has a very large stomach which usually indicates malnutrition. David needs to be tested for H.I.V as his health is poor. His Mum has died leaving his father to take care of him and 7 siblings alone. His father has no proper job, so he does some piecework to find some money to buy what they need to survive in addition to what they can grow. David is in great need of a good balanced diet. He lives in a rural village and often there is not a good variety of food unless people are very serious about their gardening.

As I sit on a wooden pole shaped bench outside a Grass roofed Church 28kms from Choma town chatting with some of the orphans and elderly Grandmothers who are caring for them, I marvel at how some of these orphans manage to smile when you see how many of them are in need of

clothes, shoes and a balanced diet. Many of our orphans look small for their age and this would suggest malnutrition. In this particular area there is very little English spoken even though the national language in Zambia is English. All children are supposed to be taught in English but this is not always the case especially in the rural places. Tonga is used in this particular area.

In the West we are so privileged to be able to go to school, have clothes and strong shoes, and always have enough food to eat. It is very unusual for Children in the developed world not to have the opportunity of a good education. As an orphan committee we have been visiting many of our orphans throughout our Consistory (circuit). Our main purpose is to find out how these children are being cared for; their needs in terms of school requirements and the challenges and problems they are facing in their homes. Most of our orphans are a 'double' orphan, which means they have lost both parents.

In June we held a fund raising activity in order to generate some income to help us pay school fees and purchase shoes and school uniforms. Envelopes were given to church members to put money in and members were also encouraged to bring shoes or clothes or items we could give to our orphans. As we visit our orphans we ask them for their shoe sizes. I then go to the local market with some of the committee members and we spend a long time choosing good second hand shoes which cost on average £10. New shoes are just too expensive for us to buy. As we are supporting 150 orphans shoes have not been bought for a long time due to lack of funds. Shoes are a necessary purchase as we have discovered on our visitations that many of our children do not have shoes acceptable for school and one orphan was even sent home from school until she had the proper school shoes.

Mrs. Munsaka's story

One of our Church Colleagues Rev. Esther Mundemba phoned me one day and asked me to come and visit some of her Church members. She specifically wanted me to see how one of our Church members was living. I was truly shocked at the living conditions of this lady who could be in her 50's. Mrs. Munsaka is living alone and is caring for three orphans. Several of her own



children have passed away. She was digging a hole for washing and drinking water when she fell in and as a result has damaged both her knees. When I first visited her she could not walk, just shuffle along on the ground. Rev. Mundemba was very concerned for her situation. This Grandmother was living in a grass shelter when I first visited her. She had managed to start building a small house with burnt bricks, but was unable to roof it. As we sat

and talked with her, we realised we might be able to help her roof her house with assistance from the students at Chodort Training Centre. As we left Mrs Munsaka insisted on giving Rev. Mundemba and I some of her sweet potatoes she had grown and also gave me an embroidery piece she had made depicting Abraham and Isaac. Her generosity was truly moving.

The students at Chodort have been able to roof her house and are currently making two doors for it as part of their practical training. As the students roofed her house, she again overwhelmed the students with her generosity and kindness by digging her cassava and cooking lunch for them.

It is a privilege to be able to assist and share God's love with such people who can also display God in their lives by their actions.

Mrs Munsaka has since had some physiotherapy and is now able to move a little with the aid of home made wooden crutches.



Please pray for the work of the Orphans Committee and Chodort Training Centre both of which are part of the ministry of The United Church of Zambia. Thank you for your prayers and support.

David and Rhoda Nixon

Choma

Zambia

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