



Jesus the Rock Missions Foundation; Reg.No. 05081014, Zwolle, NL
Postal Address NL: Orionlaan 22, 7771 EK, Hardenberg, The Netherlands
Postal Address RSA: PO Box 780, Gonubie, 5256, South Africa
Tel NL: +31-523-272329; Tel RSA: +27-82 660 9471
E-mail: info@jesustherockmissions.com
Website: www.jesustherockmissions.com
Banking Details NL: ABN-AMRO 40.12.82.228, Hardenberg, NL
IBAN: NL84 ABNA 0401 2822 28; BIC: ABNANL2A
Banking Details RSA: Standard Bank Vincent Park, Br.Code: 053721
Acc.No: 084 1200 88, Acc.Type: Savings, BIC: SBZAZAJJ
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...the God and Father... comforts us in all our troubles so we can comfort those who are in any trouble with the comfort we ourselves have received from God. (2Cor. 1:4)

NEWSLETTER SEPTEMBER 2020

By: Wiebe van der Heide

Dear Family and Friends

First of all a warm 'thank you' to all of you who are supporting us and the work of JTRM. Through your support you are partakers in the work and together we may show God's goodness to people benefiting from the activities. Once again, 'Thank You!!'

Our previous newsletter was sent beginning March and as we all know much has changed since then. In this letter we will let you know what we have been doing during the past few months.

"But the LORD is the true God;
He is the living God
And the everlasting King.
At His wrath the earth will tremble,
And the nations will not be able to
endure His indignation."

Jeremiah 10:10

Board Members (in the Netherlands)

In February we welcomed Auke Bergsma as a new board member for Jesus the Rock Missions. Auke has known about JTRM for a number of years and has visited us in South Africa in 2014. He became the new vice-president and has already proven to be a great addition to our team. Reini van Eck was the out-going vice-president, who was in this position for the past 14 years, and wished to be a board member without specific tasks. Many thanks to Reini and her husband for all they have done for JTRM as well as for us as a family. We are very pleased to still have you with us supporting the work.

We were very saddened when our treasurer, Henk Lunshof, suddenly passed away after a short illness on the first of June. What a blessed time we have had with Henk as board member. At the end of last year he and his wife still visited us in South Africa and he wrote about that visit in our previous newsletter. Henk died in Christ, what a glorious life he may live now, we will remember him for his enthusiasm and his interest in others.



Auke Bergsma in 2014, helping with the finishing of building the Youth Centre during his visit.



Henk and Elly Lunshof during their visit in November last year



Food Distribution

South Africa went into a 5 week hard 'lockdown' on 27 March. Our last weekend with the children staying on the farm had been the weekend before. During the first week of the 'lockdown' we were involved in distributing 800 loaves of bread in Mzamom'Hle Township 3 times a week. But the business providing the bread felt the need to stop after only 3 times as negative reports concerning the distributions were spreading. It did not feel right for us to just stay at home knowing that many people in the Township would be struggling as no work would mean no income and no food. That is how we started buying basic food items for distribution and soon enough others were donating finances for this endeavor and the project expanded rapidly. It was seen as an 'essential service' and therefore allowed. At one point we received, from a local farmer, over 3000 kilos of food items to which we added other items to make a complete parcel. Also the gospel message was added to each parcel. We always try to give the parcels to those who really need support. It goes well because of the relationships we have with the people and also through the assistance of a number of young people who used to be part of our programs as children. Up to now we have been able to distribute 1026 parcels (each 7 kg) and are still going on.



Youth Center Extension

Our youth center is usually crowded and noisy when the kids are here for a weekend so we decided to build an entertainment hall in the form of a shed. As the schools were closed due to regulations, 3 of our regular boys were involved with the building and did most of the hard work. We named the hall 'The Shed' and Simone made a beautiful painting for on the wall. 'The Shed' has been enjoyed many times already during day visits when groups of children came to the farm for 'church'. Our regular weekends have not taken place since



April due to 'regulations' but we hope to be able to start soon. Also our daily activities with the children have been on hold since April but as from this month (September) it may be resumed.



THE STORY OF A YOUNG FATHER

During the last week of August I brought a young father to the hospital to see a doctor. For more than a week he had much pain in his stomach and could not eat. He had been to the clinic in the Township where first aid is provided but they would not help him under the corona regulations, also they would not give him a referral letter for a doctor at the state hospital. He was told to come back another day and maybe then they could give him a letter. Five days later he went back with even more pain and still not able to eat; again no referral letter would be given. That is when we heard about his situation. That evening he told me in an sms that he was in so much pain. The following morning I picked him up and took him to the state hospital there he was told that he needed a referral letter from a clinic. A clinic was right next to the hospital where he went. All they did there was record the date and time he was seen, no referral letter was given and no medication; he was sent home. We finally took him to a private doctor, whom he could not afford, medication was prescribed and he is recovering.

THE VIRUS

During April speculations were that the outbreak would peak in September, that 40.000 people would die and that townships would be greatly affected due to the crowded living circumstances. None of these speculations came true; the peak was reached during the first half of August, deaths were much less and Townships were least affected. In fact, we have only heard of one death in the Township where we are. I spoke with a nurse, who was part of our programs as a young boy, and who now works in two hospitals. I asked him if he saw people from Townships in the hospitals. This was not so; he said that it were mainly people from the suburbs. We then discussed why this could be and came with the theory that people from Townships may have a stronger immune system as many of them live in unhygienic conditions.

It is very sad to see that the 'lockdown' has done much harm to families where work has been lost and where children have not been able to go to school for 5 months. During these months children have gotten used to street and gang life.

For many people it has also become a period where they have been challenged to trust in God as there was no one and nothing else they could rely on. Our prayer is that this whole situation may bring people to God. Everything around us is changing but God will never change. We do not need to fear death; we will die to go home when God decides.

Wishing you all much wisdom, strength and peace from God. He will be with you!
On behalf of the board of JTRM,
Wiebe van der Heide

"...if My people who are called by My name will humble themselves, and pray and seek My face, and turn from their wicked ways, then I will hear from heaven, and will forgive their sin and heal their land." (2 Cron. 7:14)