

ANDREW & RONEL MURRAY IN MAGOGONG (NORTHERN CAPE)

“Thank you for your prayerful support of the ministry here in the Magogong area. We are so aware that it is by God’s grace in answer to prayer that the work can continue.

“About three weeks ago a young man came to see us. I was surprised to recognize him as a boy I had taught in primary school. He was radiant and told us how he had committed his life to the Lord after Andrew had visited his High School with an outreach team. This was an unexpected encouragement and made us realize that God’s Word is powerful and that the seed of His Word does not return void!” (Ronel writing on 12 October 2005)

Christian Youth Outreach

Andrew and Ronel, based in Magogong (in the vicinity of Taung and Pampierstad, about 120 km north of Kimberley) work with this ministry which was started by a group of Dutch Reformed Church ministers. It has an Executive Committee now consisting of three Tswana teachers, a DRC minister and others. Three local DRC churches as well as the local United Church and Assemblies of God support the ministry, mainly in practical ways (e.g. providing volunteers and food for camps, etc.).

CYO aims to evangelize and disciple the youth in the Taung, Pampierstad and Magogong areas through –

1. *Bible Clubs in schools*: Teachers and principals of many schools are open to such clubs being established. They meet after school hours and are led by Christian teachers trained by Andrew (primary schools) or committees led by students who have also been trained (high schools). When depending on teachers it is not always easy to maintain the momentum as they are themselves so overwhelmed with work.
2. *Camps* are good occasions when young people are challenged to give themselves to the Lord. Volunteers are trained to be leaders of various groups of participants.
3. *Life Skills Training in Schools*: Teams of eight volunteers each run 2-week programmes in a school using Scripture Union material especially written for this purpose. Since March 2006, two young ladies from the Southern Baptist Missions Department in the US, *Lyndee Joe* and *Hayley Crews*, are helping with this project, leading each a team in Taung and Pampierstad, after being trained together with the volunteers during a workshop in May.
4. *Holiday Outreaches*: Another very effective evangelism tool as well as a way to disciple young converts. For the last few years a team of young people from Central has joined local volunteers to do such outreaches during the July holidays.

There are 180 schools in an 80 km radius around Magogong with open doors for ministry, but so far only 40 have been reached. Andrew is also involved in regular meetings for farm labourers and the workers of a business in Pampierstad, besides being asked to preach in Sunday services in some of the supporting churches from time to time.

Camps:

A primary school camp in August 2005 was intended to be a follow-up of the holiday outreaches in July. However, many who attended had not been to the outreaches. So it ended up being part discipleship, part evangelistic camp, as most of the latter made a first commitment to Christ. The volunteer leaders from Taung gave their all, and the kids responded to them with openness. "Little Rabone from our Magogong Primary School comes to mind. She told me that she'd prayed at the statuette of Jesus the Good Shepherd, who has a little lamb over his shoulders (we camped at the old Catholic school hostel, Nazareth House, in Warrenton)". Subsequently, several clubs were started in the schools represented at this camp.

Another primary school camp took place in April this year which was attended by twice the number of children than expected – most of whom had been to camps and outreaches in 2005.

Life Skills Teams:

These tend to be very unstable because they consist of unemployed young people who, as soon as they have an opportunity to earn some money, leave the team. Andrew and the CYO Committee are looking for ways to raise some regular support for them. Applications for a grant from the Government Health Department have so far been unsuccessful. These teams all minister in Tswana speaking schools, but Andrew hopes to develop Afrikaans speaking teams for Coloured schools in Bonitapark township.

Holiday Outreaches:

Andrew reported regarding the involvement of the team from Central in last July's outreach. Five members under the leadership of Gareth Simpson joined some Taung volunteers for the outreach there. The number of kids attending increased from about 30 to 80 during the week. Some responded to the Gospel, being prayed with by the leaders in their small groups. The programme included sport, Bible lessons with skits, Bible memory verses, lengthy group times and team competitions. The kids wanted the team to continue for another week. The team agreed to a compromise by extending the last day by 2 hours.

The other half of the Central team was led by Ryan van Rensburg to do the outreach in Bonitapark. This one was totally different in spirit, due to the tremendous socio-economic problems in that township. Many kids were aggressive, unruly and had a short attention span. However, many of the 150-180 attending responded positively in the small groups ("not so small, in spite of having 18 leaders"). Some prayed with their leaders to receive Jesus into their lives. Most seemed to enjoy the activities. Five local churches provided and served refreshments.

The Family

Ronel was teaching in a local primary school until August last year. After finishing a degree in psychology and counseling she now studies for an honours degree with UNISA. Besides helping in the ministry and working on the farm, she also plays the organ on Sundays in one of the DRC churches.

They have three children: Andy, Helen and Peter. Andy did his matric last year. “We praise God for taking him through his school career with flying colours. God has blessed his witness as he has taken a firm stand for God.” He is now doing a ‘year of your life’ course with the Timothy Leadership Project in Wellington (Cape). Helen (Grade 11) and Peter (Grade 7) are at boarding school in Bloemfontein.

After Andrew’s mother passed away and his father moved in with his sister in Amanzimtoti, the family moved into his parents’ house on a small farm. They are growing pecan nut trees, cabbage, pumpkin, melons etc., selling them for a small additional income and hoping that the farm project will provide for their future support.

The Vision

Andrew’s vision for the future is that local Tswana churches would catch the vision of mission outreach and reach the point where they will send out Tswana-speaking missionaries themselves. To this end he convenes regular get-togethers with the pastors in the area, monthly meetings with a number of them with their wives, from various denominations, as well as Pastors’ Retreats. There has been some mistrust between various denominations, and so the Murrays are praying that there would be an openness to each other and the beginning of greater spiritual cohesion in the area.

Pray –

- For means to transport the kids to and from the camps: until recently a high school in Taung lent their truck to the ministry for this purpose, but it is no longer usable
- For Lyndee and Hayley as they lead the Life Skills Teams, for a fruitful ministry in the schools, and that funding may be found to support the team members
- For a camp 16-18 June and the holiday outreaches in July
- For Andy in Wellington and Helen and Peter at boarding school
- For the safety of the family on the farm and grace to cope with the loss of the Toyota Venture (stolen from the front of Central on 11 May) and all its contents including just acquired Life Skills literature from SU and T-shirts. “We are still reeling from the loss of our car and its contents. I am especially struggling to piece my life together again without cellphone, diary and address book, dark glasses, books, etc. It was also rather bumpy at the back of the American girls’ bakkie for all of us to and from the Life Skills class today (16.05.06), and trying to make the books stretch, some sharing.”

A support group for the Murrays has been re-established at Central. If you would like to support them, and/or receive regular news, contact Val Nowlan (Tel. 012-361-5194 or 082-883-1877).