



Africa



Mark Behle serves in Lesotho, appointed by the Common Global Ministries Board of the Christian Church (Disciples of Christ) and the United Church of Christ

August 2006

A Fruitful Life



“Be joyful always;” (I Thessalonians 5:16)

It is hard to be joyful always, but if anyone can do it I think it would be Mr. Mpakanyane. He has the most contagious smile I’ve ever come across. I’d challenge anyone to hold back their smile in his presence as he shares the Word of God and his joy in the Lord accompanied by his accordion which he plays with a special verve! I’ve heard him speak twice, most recently at a Scripture Union rally I attended along with 24 students from our Friends of God group. Although a large man, he shares his faith in a gentle, authentic manner, which contrasts wonderfully with his energetic delight in making music for the Lord. His message emphasized important aspects of the rally’s theme, “Leading a Fruitful Life”. “A fruitful life”, he said, “is one that is outward-looking.” He gave an example from the beginning of Acts 8 where the early church, in the face of persecution in Jerusalem, did not look inwardly upon their problems but instead took the gospel beyond the city to Judea and Samaria.



“A Fruitful Life” – Element of Seasons

A week after school resumed in late July, we had our first precipitation of the winter season, just as the first blossoms on the peach trees were showing. After a day of cold rain we had some wet snow which covered the ground for a morning. There was enough for students to make a decent snowman and me to enjoy throwing snowballs. It was the best snowfall at

Masitise in my ten years here. Heavy snowfalls in the mountains



stranded travelers for several days and brought joy to the operators of Lesotho's sole skiing facility. The week of rain, snow and low temperatures kept us bundled up in the unheated classrooms as well as reduced attendance as many of the day students did not brave the elements.

“A Fruitful Life” – Element of Recreation

The boys' basketball team qualified for the quarterfinals of the national tournament and won their match 40-33. The semifinals and finals take place in early September. Meanwhile, playing in another tournament, we brought home silver medals for finishing second. Our record stands at 15-4 with three of the losses to the very team we have been drawn against in the semifinals. This year's team has been a fun one to coach and watch.



“A Fruitful Life” – Element of Community

Near the end of the month the Prime Minister of Lesotho held one of his public gatherings near the school. Afterwards he visited the historic Masitise Cave House, where I, as chairman of the Cave House Committee, presented him with a framed picture of the Cave House. We hope the publicity associated with his visit will attract more visitors to the site which was the home of one of the early missionaries of the Paris Evangelical Missionary Society, Rev. David Ellenberger, who served at Masitise

from 1866 to 1904. Global Ministries' partner church in Lesotho, the Lesotho Evangelical Church, came into being through the work of Ellenberger and his many colleagues.

As I listened to Mr. Mpakanyane's message about producing fruit for God I thought about all the work and patience that are required before a fruit tree actually produces fruit. There are several years of labor and careful nurturing before those first fruits are enjoyed. His comments about the importance of prayer in producing fruit made me think of the importance of other elements, such as regular reading of the Bible and worship, in producing the fruitful lives that God desires. May God grant us the wisdom to nurture ourselves with these vital aspects for sharing in the fullness of life which Jesus came to give us.

“I came that they may have life, and have it abundantly.” (John 10:10b)

Yours in Christ,

Mark Behle

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