

Free Grace Evangelistic Association

(Mark 16. 15, 2 Timothy 2. 2, James 1. 27)

Registered Charity No. 1139084

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Report on the Visit to Zimbabwe by the FGEA Chairman – September 2019

Dear Friends,

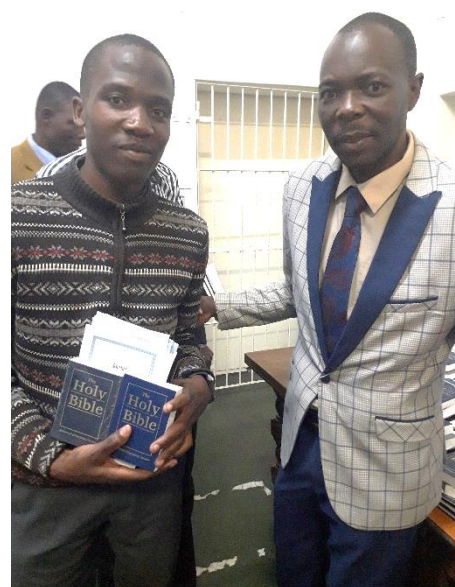
I am thankful for the Lord's gracious help and preservation throughout my recent mission to Zimbabwe. During the visit I spoke at meetings in Karoi, Kwekwe and Harare. These were areas not touched in my previous visit in 2017. The theme of each meeting was "Building upon the foundation of true Biblical Doctrine." These meetings were aimed at pastors and church leaders. Our burden was that of 2 Timothy 2 v 2: "And the things that thou hast heard of me among many witnesses, the same commit thou to faithful men, who shall be able to teach others also." At the end of each meeting, those who registered received Trinitarian Bible Society (TBS) Ndebele Bibles, TBS Shona New Testaments, Bethel Pulpit sermon booklets and TBS literature on Bible versions. A large quantity of English Bibles had arrived safely, but the process of gaining customs clearance had been too lengthy for their release to be in time. Therefore, allocations of KJV Bibles will be sent to each organising committee for distribution to the registered attendees.

For the whole visit I was accompanied by Pastor Maxwell Msindo, FGEA Zimbabwe Co-ordinator, and his deputy, Pastor Alex Madzongwe. The Lord's special help and presence was known, and it was very humbling to hear the testimonies given of the Lord's work in changing lives and ministries through the truth. Pastor Madzongwe himself spoke of how he is still using the KJV Bible received from the first FGEA meeting in Zimbabwe in 2010, as well as holding a very well-used copy of the TBS booklet "Which Bible Version?" He also spoke about how he had been using both the KJV and another modern version in the ministry, until one service he was shown very clearly the Lord's way. Pastor Madzongwe had prepared his subject from the KJV, but at church he had the modern version in front of him. When he turned to a key text (first part of Luke 9 v 56: "For the Son of man is not come to destroy men's lives, but to save them"), he found to his astonishment that his text was missing! He vowed after that only to use the KJV; and later



when coming into contact with FGEA and TBS he then more fully understood why these modern versions were corruptions of the truth. Pastor Madzongwe is now the FGEA deputy Co-ordinator and has been greatly used of the Lord in Matabeleland, where there is a well organised structure with about 1200 FGEA Zimbabwe members. Tens of thousands of TBS Bibles have been distributed across the Ndebele speaking areas. Some pastors in outlying areas did not possess a Bible (or their only copy was incomplete) until FGEA distribution took place earlier this year. Some FGEA meetings in Matabeleland had 600 or more at each meeting. The photo shows myself, Pastor Madzongwe and brethren from Bulawayo who had travelled nearly 200 miles for the meeting in Kwekwe (Pastor Madzongwe is the 2nd from the left).

Outside Matabeleland there are about 300 members in Shona speaking areas, and the national FGEA committee in Zimbabwe is seeking to establish FGEA zones in these areas. The meetings during my visit were particularly aimed at teaching and encouraging the brethren in those locations where further establishment of the work of FGEA is particularly needed.



Bible and literature distribution in Harare

At the meeting in Karoi, a pastor stated that he had a congregation of 150 with various Bible versions, including that of the Jehovah's Witnesses. He requested help including extra copies of the TBS booklet "Which Bible Version?" to help in teaching the people about the need for a faithful version. We were able to provide some immediate copies of the booklet, and FGEA Zimbabwe officials have made themselves available to provide help and advice. Following the Karoi meeting, we visited a small church on the Lord's Day that had in recent years lost two pastors who were closely involved in FGEA. We sought to encourage them in the Word, and spoke on the text: "And when they had lifted up their eyes, they saw no man, save Jesus only." Matthew 17 v 8. We also visited the bereaved families and prayed with them.

The largest gathering of pastors was at Kwekwe. In February the Zimbabwean FGEA brethren had held a meeting and formed a new zone in Kwekwe. Testimonies were received from local pastors that this has been made a real help to them in the ministry, and what they have learnt they are now teaching others. One had gone away from the February meeting and carefully searched out whether these things were so with a Berean spirit (Acts 17 v 10 - 12); on finding that they were indeed so, he rejected the corrupt versions. He also said that the distribution of the TBS scripture calendars had helped to bring a discipline in reading the Bible within the church. During the Kwekwe meeting another senior pastor gasped in amazement when we studied Colossians 1 v 14, and found the New International Version (NIV) had omitted the words "through his blood." These and other passages were used by God to open the eyes of many, who had not realised the seriousness of the attacks upon the Holy Scriptures. We sought to testify of the great spiritual blessings from the pure Word and from the faithful teaching of the truth, as it is in Jesus.



There is a particular desire in Zimbabwe that the local FGEA zones should raise most of their funds locally for the costs of distribution and teaching, and be organising systematic teaching to leaders on the foundations of the faith and the doctrine of the Holy Scriptures. The national committee is now working towards registration of FGEA Zimbabwe early next year, God willing. I joined in a Committee meeting so that I could learn more about the work of FGEA in Zimbabwe and also provide some advice on the steps needed to achieve registration. The national Co-ordinator Pastor Msindo (standing on the left of the photo) sees these developments as a vital preparation for the eagerly awaited TBS Shona Bible. There is burden of prayer for the publication of the Shona Bible in a faithful translation.



The FGEA Zimbabwe Treasurer (Pastor Tinashe Veremu from Mutare near the Mozambique border) travelled to Harare so that we could meet with him during the Harare conference. God willing, there will be FGEA meetings in Mutare in the near future to distribute Bibles and literature, and to establish an FGEA Zimbabwe zone there. This is particularly important, because Mutare in God's hand can be a base for moving into the neighbouring regions of Mozambique where Shona is also spoken, and where there is a great need of the Scriptures.

Pastor Msindo has also observed that many pastors need guidance and teaching on matters of scriptural church order and the conduct of divine worship. Reading, preaching and teaching of the Word of God must be central, but often there is not the correct balance and priorities, with other things intruding where they should not. This is another area in which the brethren in FGEA Zimbabwe are prayerfully seeking the Lord would open a door.

I would close in thankfulness to the Lord for gracious and wonderful help during the visit. I would record my heartfelt gratitude to many Zimbabwean brethren for their labours, and to thank TBS, Bible Spreading Union and the Bethel Pulpit for grants of scriptures and literature. I would also thank our donors who kindly helped to support the costs of this mission.

With warm Christian regards,

Ian Sadler