



The Gary Norberg family, Missionaries to South Africa, P.O. Box 13497, Grand Forks, ND 58201

May – June 2018

Dear Faithful Brethren,

Greetings to you all. We are well and busy, busy, busy.

In March I wrote to you about the men who congregate at a cluster of shops waiting and looking for work. I have found out much about those men since then. Before I get into that, there are very different approaches people here make toward their own survival.

- There are the homeless, many of whom beg on the street corners.
- There are the thieves who rely on making prey of others who might have something they can steal and resell. (Cell phones are a popular item to steal from passers-by.)
- There are hawkers on the street corners who are selling items that they believe drivers by will be interested in. Often we have seen them selling phone chargers, DVD's, hats, covers for ID books, etc.
- There are garbage recyclers. Almost every community in town has garbage pick-up once a week. Garbage is carried out to the side of the street and sometime that day (hopefully) it is picked up by the city employees. Before that garbage is collected by the city trucks, the voluntary informal "recyclers" come by, usually pushing old shopping carts. They go through the garbage bags and remove anything that is recyclable: paper, aluminum, plastic, etc. Of course they also look for left over food and used clothing, and anything they might find of personal interest or that would be marketable. After a day's work, we have seen some of these men pushing those carts, and the carts are not only filled with full plastic bags, but there are bags hanging from the sides of the carts. They can take up half of the width of a regular traffic lane with their carts. These have clearly found a resource from which they can scratch out a living, and they work hard at it. The mess they leave behind is not so nice to see.
- Some survive by selling drugs and some by selling themselves. Then some survive by selling others. I met a lawyer a while back who works with the human trafficking department of the police. He told me that the night before they had found and liberated a young lady who had been abducted and forced into prostitution. If I remember correctly, the young lady had been captured three months previously, forced to sell herself, and in the process was also hooked on a drug such as heroine.

While the circle near our house is a legitimate place to look for good workers, it is not the place where the most honorable workers generally go to find jobs. Many of the men there will find a job for a day but will not show up the next day because they have gotten a bit of pay. I have been told that most of the men there smoke marijuana, and I have seen some of them doing so. There are some who are picked up for a day of work and then taken back to the same spot after they have been paid at the end of the day. In some cases the person who employed them will go into a little grocery store after dropping the worker off. There are times when they come out of the grocery store and see the man they had hired coming out of the liquor store, apparently spending their hard-earned money on booze, instead of food. We have worked and worked with those men and

have had some good prospects from among them. Some of them have done small jobs for us around the house and yard, and some have come to church. But it has taken time to make progress with these people. Still, some continue to attend, and encouragingly, they ask for more and more materials to read, particularly in their native language.

While some of the men we found at that circle have been pretty faithful, others have begun to back off from attendance. There are many such places in town, and those who go there have one primary expectation: to get work. But usually there is no employment, so they more or less sit all day and talk. What a sad way to spend a life.

In my last letter, I also asked prayer for those who had surrendered to serve the Lord but have been distracted by various interests and have ultimately left the place where they could grow and learn. Often the distraction is employment. Sometimes it is the pressure of the family. Sometimes it is the lusts of the flesh. Anyone can be distracted from the truth by the lures of the world. There have been those who, over the years, seemed to serve the Lord with a passion but later drifted away. In many cases these were undoubtedly false-professing Christians. In some cases they are true believers who simply need a bit more courage or wisdom or faith. I am not the only missionary in Africa who has experienced this. I would ask you to please pray for the young people in Africa who respond to the truth but who are tempted to stray from it. Please pray for them that they continue to hunger for truth more than anything else, and that they learn to walk with God and stay faithful.

In March, two young men returned to Bloemfontein to work with us. Much prayer was invested in this, and it was obvious that the Lord was orchestrating this move. We praise God for the fruit of this burden and the working of God. Again, I ask you to please continue to pray for the young people in this country who, to some degree, want to serve the Lord but are tempted to distraction because of their under-developed sense of priorities and their immature faith.

Meanwhile, we praise the Almighty God for the work He has accomplished and, by faith, for the work that we believe shall be accomplished. Our God is wondrous!!!

In Christ,

Gary D. Norberg

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Thank you for 200 Received in March / April 2018