

Deaf Ministries International

Issue 26 | February 2020

*Taking the Gospel
to the Deaf*

Ligao - Nothing will stop them!

In spite of all the disasters, life goes on in the Philippines. Bit by bit the school is being put together following the typhoon which hit just before Christmas. Roofs are being fixed, buildings rebuilt, the mess cleaned up and classes are back. There is still no electricity and communication is a bit difficult. They have to go into the Ligao township to send messages to us. The spirit



Teachers ready for students



Rebuilding

of the Filipinos is amazing; no complaints just get up and get on with it. There is still much to be done however, we are thankful for the money that has come in to help with the repairs and reconstruction. So far almost AUD\$35,000 has been donated! As buildings blow away they are being replaced by what

we jokingly call scud missile-proof buildings, which we trust will stand up to the next typhoon. We know that with the disastrous bushfires here in Australia, Australian donations have understandably been diverted to help local bushfire victims. Pray that we will be able to raise what is still needed to complete the repairs in the Philippines.

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Our loss is Heaven's gain

Johannes Olschewski

We have been saddened to learn of the passing of one of God's most gracious and amazing men, Johannes Olschewski. Johannes and his wife Joy, were instrumental in leading and starting many of the deaf fellowships in Germany and have been great supporters of DMI over the years. Johannes was the keynote speaker at our 2nd (2002) DMI conference held in Chiangmai, Thailand and was a great blessing to us all. On several occasions, Johannes and Joy served on mission trips to our schools in the Philippines. The amazing thing about Johannes was that he was deaf and blind. He could have been excused had he been bitter and angry but instead, he was a joyous man with a great sense of humour. He loved a joke and not only knew what was going on around him with the people in his life, he had a great love of the word of God, which he studied diligently.

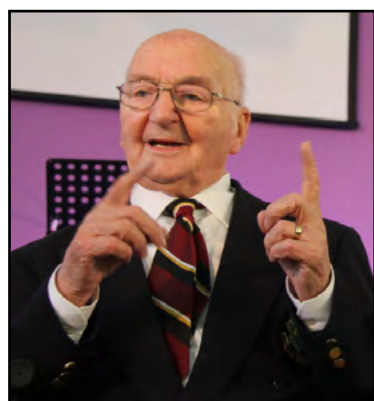
God used Johannes for His work in various countries around the world. He did mission work in India, visited DMI work in Korea and Japan, and also visited us here in Australia.

He was greatly assisted by his wonderful wife Joy, a worker originally among the deaf in Ireland. Johannes was from a Christian family of 3 deaf blind children. He was born during WWII in an area that was at times, part of Germany, then of Poland. His father had been drafted into the German army, leaving his mother to care for the children at a terrible time in history. She escaped the advancing Russian army in a horse and cart, crossing frozen rivers to get to the advancing American sector. Johannes has been an inspiration to all who knew him.

I'm sure he will hear the words of Jesus, *"Well done good and faithful servant"*.



Bert Barrett



We lost another faithful worker among the deaf recently with the passing of Bert Barrett in the UK. Bert was a CODA; child of deaf adults. With his parents being deaf, this meant he grew up in the deaf world so understood the hearts and minds of deaf people. Bert served the deaf for many years with ministries in Belfast Northern Ireland, England and South Africa. He too was a great supporter of DMI and an encourager to Neville personally over the years. His sense of humour and ability to minister so wonderfully to the deaf was an inspiration. Our sympathies are extended to his wife Janet and wider family.

Bruce Coventry

Although not a worker among the deaf, Bruce Coventry was a regular supporter of DMI for many years. The Ministry has benefited from a Trust that he set up following his years as a missionary for Churches of Christ in India, where he served for 20 years. Bruce lived for almost 104 years and was a faithful servant of God all this time. His last 4 years were a bit difficult with memory issues but physically he was amazing. His love for Indian people and his passion for missions are things that Neville will remember.

These faithful servants of God have joined the great cloud of witnesses spoken about in the book of Hebrews. It has been our privilege to have known them.

China



20th anniversary celebrations

It's getting harder and harder for our team in China to freely share the gospel and for us to support them financially. The government is watching peoples' travel and bank accounts very closely. Any travel abroad and funds coming in from outside the country, are thoroughly checked.

One of the sign language schools that the team started has been shut down, which has meant people have lost their jobs. Staff have been questioned and they are not sure what will happen to them if the government finds out that DMI has been supporting them for such a long time.

The team have asked us to pray for them; pray for their safety, wisdom and guidance at this time. That more will come to know the everlasting freedom they can have in Christ.

Despite these trials, the gospel is still being shared and people are hungry to know about Jesus. During the 20th anniversary celebrations for one of the churches, towards the end of last year, 6 believers were baptised. People came from several surrounding towns to join in the celebrations.



Our work in China has also availed itself of a loan from the Meno and Ruth Edgar Fund. It has been used to set up a coffee shop and also an online business selling hand crafts that the deaf have made. This is



New cafe

one way of helping to support the ministry instead of relying so much on support from overseas that is being watched so closely. Pray that these ventures will be successful in providing employment for the deaf and that profits will support the ministry there.

Fundraising for DMI Kenya 2020 Conference

As you would have seen in previous newsletters, we are preparing for our international DMI conference being held in Kenya. Unfortunately gathering people from all over the world together in one place isn't cheap! Over the next few months we will be holding fundraising events to try and subsidise some of the costs of the conference. More information will be shared with you once these events are organised.

Conference registrations can be found at: www.dmikenya2020.com

Emmanuel



Emmanuel's cousin & sister with Lewis

For many years now we have been praying for, visiting, and working with lawyers, to support the best we can, Emmanuel Banda from Zambia. Emmanuel has been incarcerated unjustly for a murder he did not commit. We have been frustrated at every turn with papers being lost, lawyers who were not doing what was asked of them. Emmanuel's cousin, Edward, was the one who convinced Neville that he was innocent after he had met Emmanuel in prison many years ago. He pointed out the impossibility of Emmanuel having committed the crime, which convinced Neville to go in to bat for him. Since then, we have been fighting for his release, but it was getting very discouraging

for him and for us as we were blocked at every turn. Gunnar has spent a lot of time with lawyers and visiting him in prison, along with Lewis, our worker in Zambia, as Neville has been a bit limited these past months.

Just a couple of weeks ago Neville was able to chat online with Emmanuel's sister and his cousin Edward again after they had visited him in prison. This was the first time his sister has been able to visit in over 6 years. He was so encouraged and excited. So were we as there is now hope for his release because his family will accept him back. We are waiting now for his sister's husband to come to the prison and then a possible release date will be set. Please pray that Emmanuel will be released soon.

Enoch

Enoch Bulime, one of the children of the late David Bulime, director of our work in Uganda, recently graduated from Makerere University in Kampala. He received an award for being the best Master of Arts student in Economics. DMI was able to help with the education of David's children for some time after his passing. Rose, David's widow, is on the far left in this photo. Congratulations Enoch!



Malawi



Teaching sign language

The church in Malawi has been growing! They've had deaf attend who do not know any sign language. This has created an amazing opportunity for the church members to teach sign language and the gospel at the same time. It has also meant that these people are now able to communicate with their family and friends, some for the first time.



Receiving Bibles

Last year Malawi endured widespread flooding which destroyed crops, farms and left many people without food. The DMI 'Deaf Action' bakery was not spared from the flooding, which washed away bread, delivery bikes and money. Since then, the workers have restored the business and it's doing well.



Oven

Bread is being baked and deliveries are being made. They're aiming to expand the business this year by expanding their deliveries to communities further away. This however will require the purchase of a motorbike or car so they are



committing the situation to prayer. The profits that are made are used to help support the DMI program. It helps to pay the wages of the bakery workers, the vocational skills teachers and other DMI activities.



Deliveries

Hearts and Hands Handcraft Stock Sellout

For many years we have partnered with Hearts and Hands in Kunming, China selling products that the deaf have made. The economic situation has now changed and we are no longer able to do so. We do however have quite a bit

of stock left over, which we are trying to sell whenever we have speaking engagements or other opportunities. If you are interested in buying any of the products we have them displayed in our office.

Would you be interested in receiving a catalogue detailing the remaining stock?

One can be emailed to you.

Please contact our office on 03 5940 5431

or send an email to us: info@deafmin.org

www.deafmin.org

Neville's Update

Greetings in Jesus' name.

We are now well into this New Year and praying that this will be a great year for DMI. We have already had visits by Albert and Kim Mercardo from Bacolod, Philippines and are now looking forward to a visit from Bing Medes and Annabel Cuachin, Directress and Head teacher of our school in Ligao, Philippines. They will be with



us in the Melbourne area from April 17th, before going on to Perth April 29th, then back to the Philippines on May 2nd. They will be at Berwick Church of Christ April 18th and 19th and then Monash City Church of Christ on April 26th. Other meetings and gatherings are being arranged in the Warragul area and also other places around Melbourne. If you would like to meet with them, let us know and

we can give you more relevant information as their visit draws closer. They will be able to give you an up-to-date report of the school in Ligao, as well as progress being made in the reconstruction, following the typhoon at the end of last year.

On the home front - we continue to battle on. Ian is being quite difficult with not wanting to go to work, continually coming up with all kinds of excuses and imagined illnesses. It is all very wearing for us. We do not understand why this is happening as he works at a great place with wonderful staff and fellow employees. He has been happy there for 14 years but, since his illness 2 years ago, it has become a battle getting him there. Lill has come down with the shingles, maybe due to the stress of dealing with Ian, I don't know. I am doing well other than difficulty in walking. I was doing physio exercises for the lymphedema in my legs and did my back in; talk about an old crock! I was hoping to get on the road again and still plan to do so - in spite of my wobbles and pain. Never the less we keep on going and will endeavour to do so as the Lord gives strength.

This is the year of our international conference in Kenya. I feel a little bit removed from it all as I have not been involved in the organisation of the 2020 gathering. It is all being handled by the Committee in Africa. It should be a great time of fellowship and praise and we would love to see you there if you can manage it. The location is a bit far off for people in Australia or the US, but very convenient for the Africans. We can't please everyone, but it would be well worth the trip if you came.

God Bless,



Neville and Lill

Praise and Prayer

- Thank you Lord for the generosity of our sponsors who have contributed toward getting the Ligao school rebuilt. We pray for the provision of the remainder of the funds needed to finish the rebuild.
- We give thanks for the lives of Johannes Olschewski, Bert Barrett and Bruce Coventry. For the way in which they devoted their lives to serving You and glorifying Your name. Thank You for their hearts of compassion for the deaf and their desire to share you with them. We pray for their families as they now learn to do life on earth without these men.
- We pray continue to pray for Emmanuel's release from prison. Thank you for the hope of the possibility of a release date being set.
- We praise You for the work that continues in China to spread the good news of the gospel, despite the government trying to control and shut down Christian organisations. Thank you that You are greater than this situation. We pray for the protection of Your servants in this country.



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**Deaf Ministries International
P O Box 395
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Australia**

Ph: 03 5940 5431

e-mail: info@deafmin.org



**International Director
& Missionary
Neville & Lill Muir
muir@deafmin.org
lill@deafmin.org
0402 181 820 (Mobile)**



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**Deaf Action
P O Box 395
Beaconsfield, Victoria 3807
Australia**

Ph: 03 5940 5431

e-mail: info@deafaction.org.au