

Kersfees in donker Afrika . . . dit is net nie dieselfde as in Europa nie! Behalwe vir die hitte, is hier geen teken van kersliggies of versierings nie. Dit voel snaaks en daarom het Lourie vir ons 'n kersboom uit dakbord gesaag wat ons en die kinders groen geverf het en toe versier het. Daria het vir ons kersversierings uit Engeland gestuur en ons het dit gebruik vir ons boompie. Die kinders het met baie belangstelling en angstigheid die vordering dopgehou! Wel, hier kan julle die gesiggies sien! Op die volgende foto het ons gemmerbroodmannetjies gebak – dit was natuurlik 'n nuutjie en daarna het ons begin gemmerbier maak wat 'n treffer is! Ek weet nie of dit die bier-klank is nie!

Ons is regtig so geseënd. Vandat die eerste reëns gekom het, het die wêreld in 'n paradys verander! Maar dit het nog niks verander aan die honger en nood van die mense nie. Almal wat kan beweeg het begin ploeg (met osse) en plant. Hier is Lourie en die kinders besig om mielies te plant.

Ons het nou al 12 HIV babas op die voedingsprogram en ek is bly om te kan sê dat dit met almal baie goed gaan. Soms gebeur dit dat die babas eers gewig verloor voordat hulle optel. Sover is almal aan die optel, of minstens stabiel. Dis nogal 'n leerkurwe soos julle kan dink, want ons moet die voog eers leer hoe om 'n bottel te steriliseer, en met 'n buitevuur en put-water is dit nogal 'n storie. Die babas het ook nie doeke nie, waar sal hulle nou geld kry daarvoor? Hulle klere moet dus minstens 4x per dag geruil word. Nou ja, met net een stelletjie klere, is dit beter om die baba kaal te hou. Ek gee nou maar 'n stel kleertjies en 2 doeke saam met die melk. Julle sal nie glo watter verskil dit in die mense se lewens maak nie, dit is seker ook maar moeilik as jy besef jy wil iets doen, maar nie die geleentheid of geld het nie. Ek het 'n harnas gestik en op die foto kan julle sien hoe lyk dit. Die babas word weekliks geweeg.

Baie keer sal 'n mens wanneer iemand vir jou vra hoe dit gaan sê goed dankie, maar dan is dit nie die waarheid nie.



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Christmas in the middle of darkest Africa . . . it's just not the same as in England! Apart from the different climate, the pressing poverty means you do not see any Christmas lights or decorations. It is a totally different experience so we decided to make a Christmas tree out of ceiling board, painted and decorated by the children with decorations sent by Daria, all the way from England. Needless to say, the children were very excited - you can tell from the expression on their faces. We also baked ginger biscuits, which was a totally new experience for the children, and then we made some ginger beer which was also a great success! I don't know if it is because beer features in the name!

We are so blessed and since the first rains arrived, the place has been transformed into a paradise. Not much has changed for the villagers, because there is still not much food around. Everyone capable started ploughing (with oxen) and planting. Look at Lourie and the children planting maize.

We have 12 HIV babies on our feeding program now and I am happy to report that they are all doing very well. Sometimes the babies lose weight first before they gain, but everyone is gaining or at least stable at the moment. It is a whole educational process because I have to teach them how to sterilize the bottles on an open fire with well water, it's quite a story! The babies also do not have nappies. Where would they get money for that? So their clothes need changing at least 4 times a day. Well, with only one set of clothes it is easier for the baby to be naked. I now give a set of baby clothes and two nappies with the baby formula. You will not believe what a difference this makes to the lives of these people. There is just so much need and such a limited amount of funds. You feel so powerless. The picture shows how the babies are being weighed each week, with a harness which I made with the sewing machine.

Most of the time when someone inquires about your

Baie keer wil mens maar nie aankarring oor hoe sleg dit nou regtig gaan nie. Wel, ek kan nou met 'n rein gewete sê - BAIE GOED, dankie! Dit het na al die terugslae met die malaria, droogte, werkspermitte en dinge, skielik gedraai en ons is sooo dankbaar! Ons werkspermitte is deur – wel, Lourie s'n - myne is nog soek, maar die vriendelike man by immigrasie het sommer my paspoort ook gestempel! Na my 3e malariasmeer positief was, het Lourie besluit om my na die sending hospitaal te neem, so 70km in die bos na die ander kant van Choma. Nou ja, ek is oppad daarheen genees (ek moet erken ek het al my hele begrafnis beplan), want toe ons daar aanland en die dokter neem weer 'n smeer, toe is dit negatief! Ons het goeie vriende gemaak en so is ons weer terug Kanjanji toe.

Donderdag het 'n pastoor ons 'n geleentheid Lusaka toe gegee om ons werkspermitte te gaan haal – wel, net Lourie sin was gereed soos ek gesê het. Teen daardie tyd het ons nie geweet waar ons sou slaap nie. Ons kry toe uit die bloute 'n oproep van Kaz en Hessie, Zambiers wat nou met vakansie is (hulle werk in London), en hulle nooi ons toe om by hulle te kom kuier en ook slaap! Kaz is so 'n goeie mens, hy het toe ook aangebied om vir ons pomp 'n skakelaar te installeer sodat Lourie nie meer in die nag (met al die slange) op en af pomp toe hoef te loop nie. Kaz en sy oom Eddie het 'n elektriesien van Lusaka af gebring waarvoor ons innig dankbaar is! Dit het ons net 'n middagete gekos, want hulle wou geen vergoeding hê nie! Whaaw ... is al wat ons kan sê!

Nou ja, Somerkersfees is dit verseker! Geniet die koue en mag die wonder van die Baba wat 2008 jaar gelede vir ons gebore is, weer 'n werklikheid word in elkeen van ons lewens. Mag ons, terwyl ons geskenkies aan ander gee, onthou wat God se grootste geskenk aan ons was ... Jesus! Geseënde Kersfees en voorspoedige 2009!



**Gisela & Lourie**

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wellbeing you do not want to bore them with your hardships and difficulties, so you just say it is going well! But this time we can truly say that and mean it. After all the difficulties with malaria, the drought, the work permits and just about everything, we can honestly say things have now changed. Lourie's work permit is approved although I am still waiting for mine, but the friendly guy at the immigration office was so kind as to stamp my passport as well! After my third smear for malaria proved to be positive, Lourie decided to take me to Macha Mission Hospital, some 70 km from Choma in the middle of the bush. Well, I was miraculously healed on the way to the hospital. I must say I was already preparing my funeral! The doctor did another test, which was negative. Glory to God! We made some good friends before returning safely to Kanjanji.

On Thursday we managed to get a free ride to Lusaka to get our work permits. We did not know at the time where we would stay that night, when out of the blue we got a phone call from Kaz who offered us a room for the night. Kaz and his wife Hessie are Zambians living in London but they were on holiday in Zambia. Kaz, his uncle Eddie and an electrician friend of his even offered to drive all the way back to Choma a few days later to install a floater switch for our water reservoir. It saved Lourie the walk back and forth in the dark each night to switch the pump on and off, with all the snakes around. The switch was installed a few days later, and after lunch together, they returned to Lusaka and would not take any payment! Wow ... is all we can say.

Do enjoy the cooler climate and may the wonder of the Baby, who was born 2008 years ago, become a reality in all of our lives. May we all, while we give presents to friends and family in the festive season, remember what God's biggest present was to us ... Jesus! Merry Christmas and a prosperous 2009 to you all!

