

Mission to Mozambique

Border Crossing

We arrived at the border with heavily laden vehicle and trailer containing 1.8 tonnes of Bibles, Discipleship books, Gospel literature, and audio/visual Leadership training materials.

Mozambique Difficult Officials

When they saw our load of literature, the Mozambique officials exclaimed, "This is too much!" and "This is a big problem" and "This is very bad". Other than these English words, they kept chattering to one another in Portuguese for about 10 minutes. I kept insisting that this was "for free distribution" and that there was "no commercial value". They seemed to ignore me and continued to chatter away in Portuguese.

Divine Intervention

Finally, as this seemed to be going nowhere, I said, "Ok, I am going now?" It was a question, but I posed it as a statement. I started moving towards the vehicle and nobody stopped me. I climbed inside and started the engine anticipating that someone would stop me, but no-one did. I edged the vehicle forward slowly with my foot hovered above the brake pedal ready to stop as soon as someone indicated, but no-one did.

I got to the gate and an official jumped up to stop me. I showed him our papers and passports which seemed to satisfy him and he opened the boom and we were through. I could hardly believe it!

Rough Roads

Immediately, as we entered Mozambique, the tar road was at an end and we were faced with soft beach sand and dunes. I stopped to deflate the tires and then continued in four-wheel-drive through the powdery soft sand that continually threatened to swallow our heavily laden tires and bog us down. I had to focus on keeping the momentum moving forward, especially when going up and over the steep sand dunes yet being careful not to go over the crest of the dunes too fast to avoid losing control on the downhill side.

Warm Welcome

We arrived to warm hospitality, and were then taken to visit the orphanage. It was a 12km, 30 minute drive in the soft sand. We had great fellowship and were then taken on a tour of the premises, and had an opportunity to sit down and chat with the principal. They seem to have many challenges, but God is helping them. They have good dormitories and bathrooms for the 60 children who live there. I had the privilege of speaking at a mid-week cell meeting where I spoke on Faith, Hope, and Love.

Great Commission Seminar

We conducted a Great Commission Seminar on the following day for Church leaders. Some of the pastors who came to attend this seminar came from as far as four hours walk away - and they walked! There was an obvious great hunger for God's Word and for teaching and training. I struggled initially to connect with them through the interpreter, but by the second lecture I was definitely able to see that I was getting through to them.

Some of the lectures that I was able to present included The Greatness of the Great Commission, Patterns for Soul Winning, What is Missions, What is a Missionary, and The Way of the Master.

I distributed a copy of Practical Discipleship to each of the participants who could read and understand English and we also distributed the Way of the Master Summary Notes to each of the participants.

Communal Farming

We saw the method used by Missionaries to assist these rural farmers to farm better. It is quite a noble and effective method. There are supporters who sponsor the initial cost of the purchase of all necessary equipment including seeds, fertilizer, water pump, pipes, valves, fencing, etc. All these costs get accumulated and then divided amongst 40 rural farmers who become part of the project.

These farmers will do all the work that is required, but as owners of the land. The land is divided equally among the 40 farmers just as the initial layout costs are. They have five years to pay back the initial costs.

So the farmers, having the advantage of modern irrigation methods, are now able to produce a much greater harvest and are able to pay back the initial layout costs within 3 years, some even within 2 years.

Doctors for Life Zavora

We headed for Zavora on Tuesday where we met the team at the Doctors for Life mission base in Mozambique. We were able to supply them with Gospel literature and various Discipleship books and DVDs.

Maforoga Mission

We heard about Maforoga Mission near Chimoio and were warmly welcomed and hosted there.

Maforoga Mission is primarily an orphanage where they look after about 40 orphans. We had the opportunity to speak to the children about missions and encourage them to pray for the

suffering Christians in the Nuba Mountains. We were really blessed when they all surrounded both Renee and I and prayed for us and our mission to Sudan.

Jesus is Lord

The next morning we were taken to a Mission training school nearby, which is called Jesus is Lord. This school is run by Dutch missionaries who are doing a very good work at training the local Christians to be missionaries. I had the privilege of speaking to the students on Outrageous Courage and Mission Vision. We supplied this mission with various Discipleship Training materials and Gospel booklets.

Sola Scriptura

We then headed North up the Chimoio/Tete road towards Catandica where there is a Bible Training School named Sola Scriptura. This Bible College is run by Missionary Piet Erasmus and is one of four which he has started. There are other similar Bible Colleges with the same name in Malawi, Tanzania, and Kenya.

We arrived about mid-afternoon, and were taken on a tour of the College. The main lecture 'hall' is the centre of the premises and is a grass-roof structure with no walls. There is a chalkboard in the front with a pulpit next to it, whilst all the students sit in chairs that have a small table attached which makes for easy note-taking.

I had the privilege of speaking to these students on Outrageous Courage that evening. I found this to be quite a challenge due to translation from English. There are three translators who translate into Portuguese, Shona, and Tsonga. So every time I say something, I have to wait for the three translators to follow each other in interpreting. The man who translates into Shona doesn't understand English but he does understand Portuguese so he receives from the man who just translated into Portuguese. The man who translates into Tsonga understands neither English nor Portuguese, so he receives from the man who translates into Shona. I am not sure how the message eventually got out at the end.

We supplied this Bible College with a library of good Discipleship and Leadership training books and Gospel Booklets and Bibles.

Potholes Galore!

The following day, we were up early and on our way to Caia by 06h00. This journey was frustratingly slow, due to the many violent potholes that were on the road. Often the road was so badly pock-marked with potholes that it was senseless to even attempt to avoid any of them. We just had to proceed slowly.

Mary Livingstone's Grave

Early the next morning, we were on our way to Chupanga to visit the grave of Dr David Livingstone's wife, Mary. The road to Chupanga from Caia is a gravel road, seldom travelled, and very bumpy; the going was painfully slow.

Forgotten Memorial

As we arrived in the little village town of Chupanga we were greeted by a bold promising signpost that read "Livingstone Memorial" with an arrow pointing off the road towards the river. We followed the narrow path for about 2km expecting to find a well-maintained memorial, as the roadside sign seemed to promise. A large church building started appearing into view and I thought, "Well, they must have built a church near this site in memory of the Livingstones." But I was wrong. Instead the church janitor pointed in a direction that led into thick tall grass. As we drove through the grass, it became increasingly obvious that this is a site which people very seldom visit.

The Graveyard

We came to the entrance gate of an old stonewalled graveyard. There were many graves in the

yard which were surprisingly well-kept considering what the path to the graveyard looked like. There was hardly any vegetation at all inside this graveyard; all grass and weeds had been cleared out and all that remained was the bare earth with a few sprouts of fresh grass and the gravestones protruding from the ground.

The Gravestone

There was one gravestone that was obviously bigger than all the others. This was the grave of Mary Livingstone. The gravestone itself seemed to be made out of cast iron; it stood about 2 meters tall and had a cross at the highest point. The inscription read: "Here repose the mortal remains of Mary Moffat, the beloved wife of Doctor Livingstone, in humble hope of a joyful resurrection by our Saviour Jesus Christ; she died in Shupunga House, 27 April 1862, aged 41 years."

Trailer Repair

On our way back towards Caia from Chuunga on the rough, seldom-travelled, gravel road we had to stop to repair the trailer. I had a similar problem with this trailer a few days earlier as we travelled from Zavora to Maforga. On that occasion the right hand side suspension had broken one of the crucial bolts which holds the spring onto the chassis. I was fortunate enough to find a much stronger steel replacement bolt and was able to repair the damage. Having anticipated that the other side would also soon break, I bought some extra bolts. Here in the bush I had to make use of that extra bolt to repair the left hand side suspension of the trailer.

Heading for Malawi

As I had a preaching appointment in Nsanje, Malawi on the following day, we decided to head for the border at the southern tip of Malawi. Having consulted the map, the GPS, and other travellers, we headed for Sena where we were to cross the Zambezi River to Mutarara and then head North for the border town of Villa de Fronteria.

Bumpy Gravel Road

The 60km trip from Caia to Sena was on a very bumpy, corrugated gravel road which took us 2 hours and 30 minutes to drive. This was very tiring and taxing as we were being thrown about inside the vehicle and tossed forward and backward, left and right, and up and down. I was relieved to see the end of the road as we arrived in Sena at about 17h00.

Danger on the Horizon

The sun was getting dangerously close to the horizon and we had not yet found a suitable safe place to camp. Sena seemed to be infested with various vices with dirt strewn about and drunkards staggering in the streets. I did not want to set up camp in, or near, this dirty town. I needed to cross the bridge and look for suitable camp site on the other side.

Bridge Impassable

As we approached the bridge, we were disappointed to find that it has been closed to all vehicles and is now a dedicated rail bridge. The single lane which used to run parallel to the train tracks which used to allow vehicles to pass one at a time, was now closed and blocked up and the road leading up to the bridge had been removed.

Ferry of False Hope

Upon inquiry (which was difficult on its own due to the Portuguese language barrier), we found out that there was a ferry which takes vehicles across the river just below the bridge. This gave us a bit of hope. As we drove towards the ferry dock and upon further inquiry we realized that this ferry only carries people and motorbikes - not cars. Everyone we asked informed us that the only way for us to cross the Zambezi River was at the new bridge at Caia, or at the Tete Bridge, even further away.

Back-Tracking in the Dark

The 300km road to Tete was seldom travelled and not recommended and I hardly had enough diesel to reach that far anyway. I was hoping to fill diesel in Sena, but they had no diesel in this town. The only way forward for us was to head back to Caia. The sun was touching the horizon as we headed back.

No Diesel

By the time we arrived in Caia, I only had enough diesel for another 200km. When we went to the filling station to fill up our tanks we found that there was no diesel in Caia. The nearest diesel was 130km south of Caia, we were told.

Plan B

With no assurance of diesel in the North and not enough diesel in our tanks to make it through to Mutarara, we reluctantly headed back south towards Chimoio and then up northwards towards Tete. We spent the night at Sola Scriptura in Catandica before continuing through Tete and into Malawi at Zobue/Mwanza.

Mozambique Mission

In Mozambique we held 12 meetings including a Great Commission Seminar, 4 Devotions and 5 lectures. We visited a School, 2 orphanages, 3 Missions, 2 Bible Schools, and a Livingstone memorial site. This was the first of 11 countries we are ministering in on this 7 month Africa Overland Mission.

Thank you for all your fervent prayers and support. Your support enables us to fulfil our missionary calling.

May God richly bless you.

In His service - and loving it!

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