

Africa Overland Mission Update - June 2013

Dear Friends and Family

Greetings in the precious Name of our Lord and Saviour, Jesus Christ.

I trust that you are all well.

We are all in good health and the morale of our team is still in good shape.

In this last month we have had some amazing and contrasting experiences as we ministered God's Word across the equator, travelled through the majestically magnificent Rift Valley, had some near death experiences, and shared the Gospel with remote people groups.

"Not by might nor by power, but by my Spirit," says the Lord Almighty. Zechariah 4:6

Mission Overview

We have now been on the road for more than 3 months, we have driven more than 14,500km. We have conducted more than 170 meetings, and we are currently ministering in the fourth of eleven countries which we plan to visit. We conducted 12 meetings in Mozambique, 60 meetings in Malawi, 37 meetings in Tanzania, and 61 meetings in Kenya thus far.

Kenya

We have been very busy with various ministry opportunities here in Kenya; we have hardly had time to take a breath of fresh air (or write this update - which is desperately overdue). Time has become one of our most valued resources!

It is really good to have Daniel join our team. He is really a big help to our team. Daniel also completed a previous Africa Overland Mission to Sudan with me.

Tanzania Terror

We had some terrific and terrible experiences in some difficult areas in Tanzania. Since then, there has been a terror bombing in a church at Arusha. Fortunately we were nowhere near this at the time, but we did pass through that area later.

Multiplied Ministry Opportunities

Our host in Tabora and Shinyanga did a superb job of arranging a very busy schedule for us and we enjoyed an effective and appreciated time of ministry in these areas. We were kept busy every day for 8 days with a **Biblical Worldview Seminar**.

Ngorongoro Crater

We had the privilege of being invited to do ministry among the Maasai people of the world-renowned Ngorongoro Conservation Area where we had a precious time of ministry. It was precious in three ways. Firstly, it was extremely expensive to enter into this conservation area; secondly, it was exciting to see God at work among the Maasai who seldom get outside missionaries visiting them; thirdly, there is a wealth of intriguing wildlife in this area.

Daylight Robbery

It seriously felt as if I was getting robbed as I paid our \$100 camping fee and \$300 entrance fee into this conservation area. Our host, who invited us and who works within the conservation area, was not able to succeed in his attempts to have the price reduced for us who were missionaries coming, not as tourists, but to minister to the remote people within its borders. The conservation authorities insisted upon first meeting us and seeing that we were indeed legitimate, before agreeing to waive any future fees.

Maasai Marvel at the Master

We had the privilege of ministering to the Maasai in a particular village where we preached the Gospel and showed the *Jesus* film in Swahili. It was great to see these colourful people gather to watch the life story of our Lord and Master for the very first time. They were thrilled and desperately requested that we stay longer and show this story of this amazing Man to other villages. We were blessed to see many Maasai trust in Jesus Christ for the forgiveness of their sins.

Wildlife for Africa

Whilst we were within the conservation area, we were taken by a guide down into the Ngorongoro Crater, which is a massive old extinct volcano crater which is home to thousands of wild animals. I was astounded at the intense density of wildlife living among each other within the steep walls of this lush crater. There is a constant supply of fresh water and enough vegetation to satisfy thousands of herbivores and this obviously is a welcome invitation for predators. We saw almost all of the big 5, with the exception of leopard.

Near Death Experience

Renee, who is the best team mate I have ever had on any Mission, had started complaining about abdominal pains which we tried to curb with painkillers. The pain was soon accompanied by a stubborn fever which drove us to visit the clinic, where she was diagnosed with an UT infection and given antibiotics.

Situation Intensifies

Because we were out in a rural area with limited medical facilities, we started doubting the diagnosis of this medical practitioner, when after 3 days of taking the prescribed medication there was no improvement, but on the contrary, the pain and fever was intensifying. We therefore started to be concerned that it might be lethal appendicitis.

Rush to Hospital

While we were showing the *Jesus* film in Karatu, the pain was so intense and the fever incessantly stubborn, that I decided to rush Renee to the nearest Hospital which was 3 hours drive to Arusha. We arrived in Arusha at 02h30 and we found very good medical assistance at a Lutheran Hospital.

We praise God for good medicine and doctors who were able to help Renee recover.

Into Kenya

In the two-and-half weeks that we have been in Kenya we have been blessed to have conducted more than 60 meetings in seven different areas.

In Kenya we have conducted 7 **Great Commission FIRE** Seminars where we have ministered to more than 200 pastors and Church leaders lecturing on the *Greatness of the Great Commission, Reformation FIRE*, and *A Call for Discernment*. We taught on Church History, drawing attention to the Greatest Century of Reformation and highlighting the desperate need that our churches have for Reformation today.

Disappointments Turn into God Appointments

We have come upon various disappointments in Nairobi and were somewhat confused and frustrated at times, until later we realized that God was at work setting up some very valuable appointments for us. Most of these appointments have come as a result of the delays in acquiring Daniel's visa for South Sudan.

Desperate Visa Application

Daniel arrived in Nairobi on Wednesday evening and would therefore only be able to apply for his visa for South Sudan on Thursday, and only be able to collect it on Monday, the following week, because it takes two days to clear. I was very busy running a seminar in Nairobi so I sent Renee and Daniel to the South Sudan Embassy with instruction to plead for a rushed visa because we were to leave for Western Kenya on Saturday.

Failed Visa Application

I had been running a seminar the whole day and was quite anxiously awaiting news with regard to the visa application. We would be in a very difficult predicament if we could not get that visa

on Friday. I was very disappointed when around sunset the team returned with sad news – they had not reached the embassy in time due to atrocious traffic jams. They had missed the deadline by only 2 minutes, even after Daniel had abandoned the traffic-bound vehicle and run ahead on foot. Despite desperate attempts to plead and negotiate with the officials, they had not even been allowed to make application. This meant that the only next opportunity we could apply would be Monday and only get the visa on Wednesday. This would be a major setback costing us valuable time which we did not have!

Creative Solution

In my attempts to try and find a solution to this visa problem, I was put in touch with a pastor in Nairobi who turned out to be a "*kindred spirit*" indeed. He is a pastor of a dynamic church, and we were able to have great fellowship as we discussed ideas on how to solve the visa application problem. This was a very valuable contact to have made here in the city of Nairobi and we praise God for the troubles that we faced that had thrust us together. We were able to donate some valuable Reformation literature and DVDs to his ministry, which was deeply appreciated.

Trailer Problems

As we were hitching up the trailer, we noticed that the tow-hitch was loose and upon further inspection, I found that one of the crucial brackets was broken and would not only need to be welded, but also reinforced. We nursed the trailer back to Nairobi where we were to search out an engineering workshop that might be able to help us with the repair work.

God Appointment

We had some business to take care of at a Mission in Nairobi, so we thought to ask them where the best place would be to have the trailer repaired. They directed us to a German Mission Base and assured us that we would be helped there. We were not disappointed!

German Ingenuity

We were overwhelmed with the helpfulness of these German missionaries who went above and beyond the call of duty and worked with precision and effectiveness till way after sunset, to ensure that our trailer would last through Sudan.

Valuable Advice

We were greatly surprised to find out that there were two missionaries from this Mission who had recently returned from Sudan, on the very roads on which we were about to travel, to the very area from which they had just returned. This was an amazing and most helpful opportunity to meet and discuss with them, and learn from their very recent experiences. I soaked in loads of helpful information as we looked over and studied our maps together.

All Things Work Together

We thanked God that night, as we realized that it was the very reason that the trailer had broken, which had resulted in us having this very valuable encounter with these missionaries who had so effectively and generously helped us in many various ways.

Dangerous Drive

As we travelled on bumpy, rough, gravel roads to a remote area to do ministry among a tribe that seldom gets missionaries, due to harsh terrain and warring tribes, we had to pass through an '*ambush alley*'. We were stopped at a police roadblock and told that we could not proceed without an escort, as the road ahead is a hotspot for hijackers and bandits, who ambush and attack travellers. We could not afford to pay for the police escort and opted to go ahead, without armed escort, trusting God for Divine protection. My heart was pounding in my chest and we were tossed about within the vehicle as we drove faster than the rough bumpy roads would allow. I did not want to give potential attackers any advantage, or opportunity, to stop our rapidly moving rig. We breathed a sigh of relief and thanked God as we arrived at our host's village compound, long after the sun had set.

Urgent Prayer Request

We would like you to specifically pray for God's protection as we continue to travel in very dangerous areas. Some of the roads on which we will travel, lead us through areas where rebels, bandits, and tribal warriors have recently killed many travellers for selfish gain. This continues to be a very real threat, but we trust that God will carry us through these dangers in answer to your prayers.

Appreciation

Thank you for your continued prayer support - we cannot do this without you. Thank you also to each one of you who has put financial support into our bank account. Your support is enabling us to continue on this Mission. There have been times when your contribution came in at a time of desperate need. Thank you very much, and may God richly reward your faithful generosity.

In His service - and loving it!

Michael and Renee Watson

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