

"And how shall they preach unless they are sent? As it is written: 'How beautiful are the feet of those who preach the Gospel of peace, who bring glad tidings of good things!'"

Romans 10:15

ZIMBABWE

Poverty and Destitution

On first arrival into Zimbabwe, I was immediately struck with how poor and hopeless people were, and the lack of joy on people's faces. To see a country which has the potential to feed the whole of Africa, so run down and needing to import the majority of its food and home goods is truly sad. One individual who I was able to talk to said that the problem is that there is no money. He said the only thing that Zimbabwe is exporting is its money. But the problem is not going to change until the citizens of Zimbabwe repent of their sin and admit that they are the ones at fault for this economic collapse.

Diligent Hands, Slothful Hands

Having grown up on a farm, and learned from an early age the blessings of working hard in good, honest labor, it was a privilege for me to be able to talk about the Christian Work Ethic, especially in the rural villages. In agricultural communities, you can see the long term effects of good or bad planning and good or bad stewardship. The fathers and mothers understand that hard work and right planning is essential for survival. The young men however do not fully grasp this thought. When I was giving the presentation, I made a point to emphasize the importance of a job being well done. God will expose every good and imperfect action on the last Day.

No Greater Love

While in Zimbabwe we organized street witnessing to encourage the congregation to go out and to get involved with their community and to start working for reform in the local area. Our host and two young girls were the few that actually joined us on the outreach. While we were handing out tracts, I would occasionally ask a few questions trying to get into a spiritual conversation. I asked one young couple if they knew the Way to Heaven, and their answers were rather delightful to hear. They said, *"the only way to go to Heaven is to believe on the Lord Jesus Christ and be saved."*

So I then asked, *"How can we show our love for God?"*

The young man answered,

"By doing what you are doing, sharing your Faith."

To make the most of every opportunity to share our Faith, no matter the circumstances, should

be a daily goal.

"Greater love has no one than this, than to lay down one's life for his friends."

John 15:13

ZAMBIA

By What Ever Means Necessary

I started the mission into Zambia on a nice front seat, but as we drove around and got more people, it was into the back you go! I cannot complain though, because it actually gave me a wider view of the ministry that is still needed in this country. While we were driving, I was able to talk to one of the pastors going with us to help with translating. He was explaining that in the Eastern Province it is still very much traditional. This means that pastors that want to plant a church must seek approval first from the Headman, who answers to the Chief. This can be bit difficult, because as it was explained to me in order to become the Headman, or the Chief, you have to engage in witchcraft ceremonies. It is very rare to have a Headman that is a true Christian.

Time?!

While we were in the Eastern province of Zambia I had my first culture shock break down. The regular need to go to this or that person's house and visit, while we were trying to keep to a time schedule wore me down and started to show. Having grown up in farming community, where jobs need to get done in a timely fashion, it was rather hard for me to get mentally into their idea of time which then hindered me from enjoying their company. But thank God there were two of us! Where one fails the other can correct. It was a real blessing to have a leader who could *ask "what's bothering you?"*

because then this attitude could be corrected and changed.

Good Attendance

All of the conferences that we held were very well attended. Not just for the very last part, but through the whole 2 or 3 days that the conferences were held. It was my privilege to speak on Rediscovering the Christian Work Ethic. A good solid work ethic is very much needed in Africa, not only to build up the economy of a community, but also for the growth of God's Church. One of the great joys that I had while on this mission was visiting the subsistence farms that our hosts were working to give a living example of what a pastor or teacher should be doing for their congregation or school, as well as to provide food for their family.

BOTSWANA

Botswana has a population of about 2 million people, of which almost half of those 2 million live

in the capital city Gaborone. It is a rather peaceful country, with a fairly strong currency, which they attribute to very low corruption. A 2014 government statistic claimed that they have an 88.6% literacy rate. However, Botswana is ranked at number 2 with the most AIDs effected orphans.

Even though the Botswana people were the first African country to receive the whole Bible translated into their native language by Robert Moffat, who was the father in-law to David Livingstone, there are very few, if any missionaries being sent out. Christian people should never sterilize the church by not eagerly looking to grow the Church of Christ. Even in some parts of Botswana there are people groups who have 2% or less that have been evangelized.

Mobilizing Evangelists

A key focus of our Mission to Botswana was to stress the importance of Salvation and Repentance, followed up by The Greatness of the Great Commission, and Way of the Master. These topics and a few others were made a prominent theme in this mission's conference, because we were mindful of the need to **"Go into all the world..."** Matthew 28:19.

Taking it to the Streets

After the Sunday service an outreach was organized. It was a good experience, both for those who attended the missions conference, as well as to go out and actually see how the teachings would be practiced. In walking down the street, I could see the participants engaged in handing out tracts, or in conversations. The report back was even more encouraging. Many people were rejoicing in the conversations that they had, or the experience of being spurned by someone, but no one had anything bad to say about the experience.

Prayer and Praise

Having traveled over 8,600 km (over 5,000 miles) and gone through about 108 police stops and road blocks, government officials looking for bribes, and having only one tyre puncture, we praise God for His mercy and protection during traveling. Thinking back to all of the extreme road conditions that our two-wheel drive pickup took us through, we are very thankful that we did not experience more vehicle troubles.

Another praise item is that neither John, nor I, suffered any sickness. During four weeks of non-stop traveling and lecture engagements we were blessed with good health.

Missions are only accomplished by the grace and mercy of our Great God. But, prayer should always be made for those on the mission, both the missionaries and for those that are being

ministered to. I would ask that Zimbabwe be regularly prayed for. Not only for the spiritual awakening that this country desperately needs, but also for the imminent threat of starvation. Due to the lack of rain this last rainy season, it was projected that many people will need relief aid in the form of food goods in order to survive. 2016 is not only election time in the USA but also for several other countries, Zambia will be voting on presidential candidates. During elections violence can, or will, occur in different areas as different parties struggle for power. Pray for peace and resolution during these times of uncertainty.

Continue on in Good Works

Out of the main lessons that I learned, there are two that stand out. First, I was challenged to check my attitude. I had to ask myself, am I going to these countries with a fixed idea of how it should go, how meetings will be run, and how time will be spent? It was particularly difficult for me to quiet myself and patiently continue working on, while we were working on *"African Time"*. It was a good reminder that I wasn't in Iowa!

The second point was the great need. In traveling through South Africa, Zimbabwe, Zambia and Botswana, I was very much reminded of the great challenge that missions still pose to the church. When William Carey went to India to preach and teach the Gospel of Jesus Christ, and when David Livingstone opened up Africa for his Savior, there was little over 1 billion people on this globe. Now, there are over 7 billion. A need for solid Bible-based missionaries to go and teach the Authority of Christ over all areas of life is even more urgent.

"The harvest truly is plentiful, but the laborers are few. Therefore pray the Lord of the harvest to send out laborers into His harvest." Matthew 9:37-38

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