

Unforeseen Ministry Opportunities

Upon starting our Mission Trip it was apparent that everything was in God's hands. At the border we were stopped by customs and told that all our material (65 boxes of literature and DVDs) that we had planned to give away was to be left at the border until we produced a letter from the appropriate church authorities stating that we were indeed going to give it all away. The border guards thought we were going to sell it!

We returned the next day with the letter and got our material back, only to find out that the border agents were Christians and held a Bible study every day at lunch time. We were able to encourage them and give them literature and exchange contact details for further encouragement at a later stage; they are now called Border Fellowship.

En route to Loziland we came across an old woman who was being pushed in a wheel barrow to the local clinic. We were able to put her in the vehicle and drive her there.

Least Reached Lozi and Luvale Tribes

In Zambia's Western Province (Lukulu West) are least reached peoples groups; predominately Lozi and Luvale speaking. None of the roads or villages were mapped and none of the local pastors in Lukulu East could tell us what the spiritual state of the people there was. All we knew about them was that they were supposed to be primitive and the assumption was that the Gospel had not yet reached them. Our aim was to spend two weeks surveying the land, mapping the villages, documenting their lifestyle, and ultimately spreading the Good News of Salvation through Jesus Christ.

Our team consisted of seven people, two of which were interpreters, traveling in two 4 wheel drive vehicles. Upon arrival our team crossed the Zambezi River on a pontoon into the unknown, where we would spend the next days working our way up to the Angolan border. With only a GPS we followed ox cart trails in low range 4x4 marking out where the villages were along the way. At the Angolan border we turned around and came back to minister to the tribes that we had marked out on our GPS.

The Physical State of the People

The villagers in the western province are somewhat primitive. They are all subsistence farmers and live off the land, eating fish from the river and fruit from the fruit trees. Their clothes aren't really clothes at all; rags are a more accurate description. The women sit and work in the dirt which is also where the children play, which we preached against. When we become Christians we are ambassadors for Christ and we don't sit in the dirt where the devil wants us to stay. The men there sat on chairs and so did we as visitors, so they do have the ability to make chairs for their women.

The Spiritual state of the people

The local people had a small dose of the Gospel from the new apostolic "*church*". Some were able to tell us that God was their Creator and some were able to tell us that Jesus was His Son and their Saviour, although they could not tell us what exactly He had saved them from. We also were never able to meet any pastors or apostles. One man who had a hunger to know his Creator and Saviour told us that "the Shepherd has abandoned his sheep" when asked about the pastor of his church.

Ministry

We were called to see the paramount chief to obtain permission to preach to the people and he posed the question: "Have you come to save my people from sin or poverty". Our response was: "from sin" To which he was very happy and said we are welcome to preach there. At the end of the two weeks we had successfully mapped 55 villages and ministered at 26.

Creation Evangelism

The people there had not all heard the Gospel before so we spoke to them from Genesis. Starting from Creation we explained how man was in a fallen sinful state and therefore needs a Saviour to get back to his Creator. The people there were so open to the Gospel. Their need to know their Saviour was apparent. Even when we asked if we could speak to them about God they were quick to call people out from working in the fields and from their houses.

Perseverance

The first time I spoke to a village there was no response because they were clearly not

interested in what a youngster had to say. It was a humbling experience that I believe God put before me. The next time I had to minister I was not in the mood, expecting another negative response. But I remembered Paul's words to Timothy when he said: "*Let no one despise your youth*", as well as when he said: "*If I wanted to please man I would not be a Follower of Christ*". I was there to spread the Word of God and could not let anything stop me.

The Curse of Drunkenness

To my surprise God convicted many of sin and they came to Christ. Although not everyone had been reached by the Gospel it seemed as though the curse of alcohol had reached them as there were small homemade breweries in some villages, with people who were drunk at mid-day. This however was not the state of all the villages, only some.

The Power of the Gospel

Preaching from Genesis and the Fall of man really makes you think about how sinful man is and how much we are in desperate need of a saviour. Each time someone spoke to a new village pretty much the same message was preached, but it really hit home. Man is born into sin and is sinful by nature and deserves punishment, but because of the Cross our punishment was taken from us. Often times we forget, or get used to the fact that Jesus bore our sins on the Cross, but we constantly need to go back to the Cross to keep it afresh in our minds and repent of our sin. For me it was almost like a renewed revelation of what Christ did for us.

Evangelism in Lusaka

Michael and Myself did evangelism in Lusaka, on the side of the road, at construction sites, in malls, etc. Evangelising using the Law of God and Redemption through Christ, we witnessed God working in many people's lives, convicting them of sin. One young man named Don (A backslidden Christian) approached me and asked me to tell him about Jesus while I was in a shop. I shared with him and asked him if he wanted to pray with me in the shop. His reply was "I remember reading a Scripture that said *I am not ashamed of the Gospel*." Afterwards he said he admired what we were doing and asked if he could follow us so he could learn how to share his faith. I told him I would meet him the next day. When we met the following day He told me that he went home and shared his faith with three of his friends, and that when they heard what he had done they gave their lives to God as well. We were able to give him literature and encourage him on how to share his faith effectively and how God wants him to conduct himself from now on.

What Went Wrong?

At this stage of the trip one of the batteries in a vehicle had exploded and we lost full capability of the turbo, the Vehicles got stuck in thick sand many a time and one of our team members contracted malaria. Praise God that in time we were able to fix all the problems (including the malaria)

Answers to prayer

Throughout the trip we had the favour of the Lord with us. As people were praying for us back at home we had favour with almost all the authorities we encountered. One policeman wanted to impound our vehicle when he found out that the person who brought it into the country wasn't driving it. After we explained that we were missionaries doing The Lords work he said: "Because you are The Lords children I will let you go."

One woman who was in Lukulu West had been beaten on her ribs by her son in law and was lying on the ground in pain. One of our team members felt led to pray for her so we, as well as most of the village who had just given their hearts to God, prayed for her. The next day when we went back, we asked where she was and they told us that she was working in the fields. From lying on the ground in pain the one day to working in the fields the next is a testimony of God's power.

Overcoming Obstacles

At the valley of Samson in Malawi we came to a track on the mountain which had not been used for 15 years due to erosion and rock fallings. The locals told us that we would never be able to make it up the mountain, so of course we tried. Going up the mountain we came across some steep cliffs, large protruding rocks in the path, and a huge boulder which took about 10 local villagers to move. It had not been moved in about 8 years! Eventually we got to the top of the mountain where all the local people were excited to see us. They couldn't believe that we made it to the top of the mountain.

Speaking to students

At a small school in Malawi our team was given the opportunity to speak to some of the students there. Going from one class to the next we were able to encourage the young students in their faith, speaking on assurance of salvation and standing firm as children of God. Praise God that there are God fearing principals such as the one from this particular school who allow people to come speak about God to the students.

Leadership Training in Zambia and Malawi

Equipped with 35 Boxes containing leadership material our team did leadership training in Ruvuzi, Lusaka, Chongwe and Balaka. Speaking on different topics ranging from The Fear of God, Unity, Prayer, Evangelism, and the Law of God we also equipped them with DVDs and Books for further research and reading on those topics.

Challenges

Trying to get enough power to run all our equipment posed quite a problem and took some innovative thinking and quick action. Speaking through an interpreter also proved to be time consuming and took some getting used to for some of us. At one of the leadership training seminars we came across a woman who seemed demon possessed. She was trying to grab the Bible out of one speaker's hand! She also sat in the dirt muttering to herself and laughing. After another one of us had spoken she put money on the pulpit as though she was trying to buy her way out of her situation. We prayed for her but it would not leave her. Matthew 17:21 "Howbeit this kind goeth not out but by prayer and fasting" Is the Scripture that came to mind. We also found out that the leaders in that area are afraid of the witchdoctors and half of them don't even have Bibles! They are under spiritual attack and have no swords to defend themselves, They are crippled by fear, so one of the team members changed his teaching to combat this fear. They still, however, do need Bibles.

Pray for Zambia

Zambia has a lot of Christian influence in its constitution but they are under tremendous pressure from their donors to legalise homosexual marriages. The Catholic Church is also pushing for a secular state so the Christians are having to stand strong. Wherever we went we spoke about Christians having to stand strong even in the face of evil, not giving into corruption, or being bought like Judas Iscariot. As Christians we cannot be bought and we need to set the example of incorruptibility to the rest of the world.

Matthew 28:18-20

"And Jesus came and spake unto them, saying, "All power is given unto Me in heaven and in earth. Go ye therefore, and teach all nations, baptizing them in the Name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost: Teaching them to observe all things whatsoever I have commanded you: and, lo, I am with you always, even unto the end of the world. Amen"

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