

REPORT ON FIRST MOZAMBIQUE TRIP

(FEB 20 - MAR 3)

MANI CONFERENCE (Movements of African National Initiatives)

I was invited to be a regional delegate to the Mani Conference in Johannesburg, based on my long history in Africa and past work in church planting and leadership training. I was asked to address the Church Planting Movement sub-group on our efforts to launch a CPM in Mozambique, coupled with the new paradigm of Discipleship Movements. I believe God blessed me with the presentation. Many of the participants thanked me for my talk and others said it was a “light bulb” experience for them. In some of the evaluations of the conference, some said that it was one of the highlights of the conference. God truly did bless me to give a passionate testimony on my life as a church planter and what God was showing us concerning focusing on developing “organically” growing churches based on discipleship chains.

ORALITY CONFERENCE (Friday afternoon to Saturday noon)

Don Waybright had mentioned many times the value of oral story telling. Neither Scott nor I could quite understand how it could be used in the discipleship process. Well, this 24-hour conference was just what I needed in order to help the team. I learned from Avery Willis the reason communicating the Bible by telling the events as stories was so important for both illiterates and functional illiterates. Then he taught us how to do it and pointed us to a series of 450+ stories they had developed for every subject you could imagine. God helped me to see the way we can use it and upon my getting to Inhambane, I used this method of telling stories at two different locations. The idea is to tell the story as accurately as possible with no extra teaching ideas thrown in, and then have someone repeat the story, at least once and if time allowed with drama, with others helping them fill in anything they may have left out. Then you ask discussion questions so that they can apply the story to themselves. Then finally you ask them to tell it to someone else before the next meeting. David, Scott’s worker, told me several times that this method really helped him to understand the Bible. Others commented that this was an easy way to understand the Bible.

MAPUTO/INHAMBANE/MAXIXE (Monday the 25th through Monday March 3rd)

Because I had been told that I needed to personally see the new Dept. of Religion director in order to choose a name for AOM that would be able to be registered, I re-routed myself to fly first go to Maputo on my way to Inhambane. I had set up the meeting for 10 a.m. on Tuesday. Pastor Carlos and his Mozambique wife, Isabel, went with me. Isabel had been our “front” person in all the previous encounters with the Dept. The new director was very nice and he decided that we did not need to register AOM based on our South African registration, but to simply apply as a Mozambique non-profit ministry (a stand alone). He helped us to choose a name that had no conflicts. It is Associacao para o Discipulado Cristao (The Association for Christian Discipleship). After working through some problems over the statement of faith, we were finally able to submit a letter asking for the new name and to be registered. Several days later Carlos told me that everything had been approved and we would receive an official letter of registration. So, God is good! He answered our prayers and the Harris and Fuentes families will be able to come in under our own registration!

I flew on up to Inhambane on Wednesday morning, and after buying a new battery for Fuentes truck, I was able to go out to Tofo to look at a house I had heard about. It was a nightmare of a house and the setting was completely unacceptable for a family. While looking for a battery in Inhambane, David mentioned that he saw Nurja's vehicle outside the shop where she worked. Nurja had helped translate when SCBC was there last year. I went over to ask where the best place was to buy a battery and then thought to ask her to be on the out look for a house for Harris family. She then tells me that they are leaving their wonderful house and it would be perfect for the Harris family. So on Thursday, I began looking at houses, and Nurja was correct. Her house is wonderful! It is in a quiet part of town, has a large yard, 3 bedrooms, and a separate 2-bedroom apartment, etc. I communicated with Scott and Lisa and sent them all the pictures. Nurja told the owner that she had someone who wants to rent the property, including the apartment. I believe God used the dead battery plus jogging David's memory to guide me to the person who could show us the house He had for the Harris family. So, now we are waiting for something official from the owner. The owner may ask for 3 months rent up front as a guarantee that we really are serious about the property. Please pray for this property. However, there is a very large and nice 3-bedroom house outside of Tofo that could serve as a stopgap for the Harris family if need be.

Friday, David and I went over to Maxixe (gas is about \$6.00 a gallon!) and visited with Gonsalvas at his market shop. Then we visited with Elvio and went with him to Zephania's village



on the way back to Inhambane.

Zephania's is a person Gustavo had been working with. We found a large gathering of about 25 women and 5 men. Zephania's taught a lesson based on the Genesis account of the fall. He asked a lot of discussion type questions and had some good responses. I was asked to share something, so I talked about how man was to be the head of the family, but he must love his wife as Christ loved the church. Then I asked them "What was before the beginning?" The discussion helped to emphasize that God is the creator of all things and we need not fear any created thing, i.e. demons or charms, because we have the authority of the creator to protect us. It was a very good visit. Zephania's seems to be a very capable teacher and, I believe, could be trained to be a good discipler. When I return on the 21st of this month, the leaders will be meeting at Zephania's village on the 22nd. I will present a teaching to the leaders at that time to prepare the groundwork for the emphasis on discipleship chains. They will also be preparing for the next Saturday's combined meeting. After the meeting, we all walked to another village to pray for a young boy who had fallen out of a tree six weeks ago. The father accused Zephania's of witchcraft since the boy had been at his house learning about the Bible before the accident (sounds logical doesn't it!). Zephania's and others have been going over regularly to pray for the child. He can move his legs and feels them, but there must be some broken bones in his back. We prayed for healing and

encouraged the child and his mother. Let us all remember this young boy in our prayers, that God will raise him up to show His glory.

Friday evening we went back into Maxixe and joined one of Gonsalvas' groups. There were 7 women, plus Gonsalvas and his brother. I told the story of the Wise and Foolish Builders along with the introduction discussion of the paragraph above the story about "some will say, Lord, Lord". They really enjoyed it and everyone promised to re-tell it to someone before the next meeting. I will ask Gonsalvas how many actually re-told the story. Gonsalvas is a pastor with a church of 75 to 100 members (what I saw on Sunday). He told Gustavo he wanted to start house churches, so Gustavo has been discipling and teaching him. Several groups have started to meet. He seems to be a very genuine Christian leader with a kind heart.

One of the surprises is that the restaurant we like the best in Inhambane had just installed a free wireless internet site for customers. That was a blessing that I had not expected. It was not always working, but was functional most of the time.

On Saturday, David and I met with a Muslim friend to go and see his house. His name is Omar and he was the one who came and helped us find the hidden anti-hijack button in Fuentes truck.

Then at 1:30 p.m., we went to the meeting that is held in the central market in Inhambane. About 30 women gathered around, plus one man. Elvio led a simple Bible study concerning Genesis 1-2 (Gonsalvas came late). I later introduced myself, gave them greetings from the Fuentes, and then shared on God's sovereignty and power verses Satan's limited power. Afterwards while everyone was shaking each others' hands, the ladies all brought some market item they were selling as a gift for me, i.e., paw-paws, avocados, wild fruit, a basket and small hand broom, bananas, lettuce, tomatoes, onions, etc. It was all done while singing and dancing around - very African and very kind.



We then (3:30 p.m.) went to Bernardo's home and visited with him and his wife. She had cooked Barracuda steaks, beef stew, rice and vegetables. She had been to a cooking school and is a very good cook. Everything was very tasty. I want her to teach Janelle how she cooked a cassava leaf dish that had crabmeat in it. I don't like crab too much, but it was delicious. Just the kind of dish you would expect to be given in a reed walled house in the rural setting! She said that if she was offered a chef's job in Inhambane, she would take it, but not if it took her away from home. I complimented her wisdom of placing her family over money.

They have been like the seed that fell on the thorny ground since they just never seemed to be able to grow. They had finally asked not to host a Sunday group in their home. Then recently

they were in a taxi accident where 3 people were killed and they themselves were injured. God helped me with a question for them to ponder. I asked them to ask God why he saved their lives by having the conductor, at the last minute, move them from the back seats where the fatalities occurred. God saved their lives to give them another chance to put Him first in their lives. I will see what they say when I return in two weeks. Pray that God will bring great conviction on their hearts and a deep revelation of how much He loves them.

On Sunday, David and I traveled back to Maxixe where I told the story of the Prodigal Son to Gonsalvas church (about 75 adults). Then we went to the house church at Dr. Luis'. Elvio taught a lesson and everyone sang in Portuguese. Afterwards, I began to talk to Elton and found out he had missed being baptized and wanted to be baptized. We really challenged him on repentance, what it meant to be a disciple and learning to obey all that Jesus had taught. When asked if he was willing to share and disciple others, he said he would if he can learn what to teach. I pointed to Elvio (his neighbor) and said he could disciple him. So, we left it with Elvio to make sure Elton was repenting and, if so, than he could baptize him the next Sunday. Elvio said he knew of several others who wanted to be baptized also. I showed Elvio how he could hold a person securely and baptize them. Then Dr. Luis' wife fixed a meal for the four of us who had remained talking. I was fasting, so I had to pass up what David said was a very nice meal.



At 4 p.m., Elvio, David and I went to Margarida's meeting in Maxixe. We met her husband whom we learned is studying for an M.A. in Bible with the Methodist Church. About 30 young people showed up and Margarida taught them the last lesson, lesson 60, in our Your New Life in Christ booklet. She kept praising the Steps to Freedom and Your New Life in Christ booklets. She feels the lessons are what the old missionaries used to teach and not what the churches are teaching today. Margarida is a very good teacher and obviously has a passion to see young people saved. God put it on my heart to share about the fact that their bodies were not their own, but had been purchased by Christ and were for His glory. I shared that they were special and loved and were like a gift to be presented to their future mate. I asked them how they would react to opening a present that was ripped and dirty, with fingerprints all over it? We had a good discussion time. Later, David said if only he had received that kind of clear teaching when he was young, he would have had a different life. He said he wished he could rewind the clock of time and relive his life. I appreciated his honest reflections.



Today (Monday), I asked Abilio to take me to the airport. Abilio is a Portuguese man who is a friend of the Fuentes. His great grandfather came to Mozambique as an immigrant, so he is fourth generation Mozambican. I am now flying on Mozambique Airways to Joburg where a missionary friend, David Bulger, will pick me up. David and Cherie kept me the night before I flew out to Maputo and also kept my truck at their house. I will start driving for home about 2 p.m. and will hope to arrive back to Janelle at around 6:30 p.m. It will have been 12 days since I left home.

REFLECTIONS

I was impressed again with how God is able to guide, influence and direct our lives. I was blessed to meet again with all the believers. We have some very good men and women who are trying to train others. I believe that there are some that, with additional focused training, can begin discipleship chains. When the team gets back and starts to help them start their chains, I believe we will see a rapid grow in disciples. God has used the Fuentes to bring many to faith and they have started the discipling process. We praise God for that. Now, it is up to the team to focus their discipleship training on those whom God will reveal the foundational disciplers. As these men and women are trained, they will start their own discipleship chains. I am excited at the possibilities. If we can keep our eyes on the goal, i.e., discipling believers to disciple others, God will give us multitudes of churches all over Inhambane Province, and beyond.