

# **AFRICAN ODYSSEY**



**Encountering God  
On The Road In Africa**

**DICKSON**

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# AFRICAN ODYSSEY

Roger E. Dickson

1989 – 1998

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## Preface

This is a book of personal experiences. Since it is a book of experiences in reference to our adventures to preach the gospel to the world, there are certainly some personal opinions expressed in the book because we encountered so many situations in our treks across the continent of Africa. Martha and I originally published this book in order to encourage others to live the gospel to the fullest in their own lives. When asked how and why we ventured forth to preach the gospel throughout the world, the only answer we could give is that we are gospel-driven people. We are not unique people in this matter. In reference to being international evangelists, we have simply followed the example of thousands who have bravely gone before us. We have simply taken up their mantle and carried on. We allowed God to have His way in our lives. Through the experiences that we have recorded in this book, it is our prayer that others do the same.

We live in an era where there seems to be a demise in the spirit of world evangelism. In our younger years, both Martha and I were encouraged by former world evangelists to preach the gospel to the world. We were somehow filled with wanderlust in reference to preaching the gospel. It is our hope that this book will at least inspire others to do likewise. If we have encouraged one disciple to go forth as an evangelist to preach the good news of the cross, then it has been worth all the effort to write and distribute the accounts of our gospel odyssey.

We want to alert the reader that two books have been blended together in producing this single volume. *African Missionary Pilot* was a book that I wrote in reference to flying around southern Africa while teaching gospel seminars. I wrote a second book in reference to my 1997 odyssey of trekking up through eastern Africa to conduct seminars from Cape Town to Ethiopia and back. Since there were so many repeated locations and experiences covered in the 1997 odyssey, we thought it necessary to make things simple by combining the adventures of both books into one volume. The reader, therefore, must be alert when reading through the contents of this book. We have tried to make notations of the dates in order to keep you on course, but sometimes this is not sufficient in piecing together all the experiences. Nevertheless, the message of the adventures that are included in this book will fulfill our theme to reveal experiences where God worked mightily through us in order that we live the gospel of His Son. We have now added this book to the *Biblical Research Library*, and thus, it can be downloaded free and shared worldwide. We want to encourage you to do this in order to join with us to inspire others to live the gospel.

## Chapter 1

### THE ENCHANTING FAIR CAPE

From creation to the time of Jesus, scattered groups of hunters and herdsmen of the Khoisan Stone Age peoples roamed the regions of southern Africa. By about A.D. 300 African tribal groups began to migrate down the East Coast of Africa. Early communities of black Africans (Bhantu) had established small settlements from the Northern Province of South Africa to the Natal regions. By the 1400s various black tribal groups had settled in many of the eastern parts of the country, whereas the Khoesan groups migrated from the western part of southern Africa down to the western part of South Africa.

In 1488 a Portuguese sailor by the name of Bartolomeu Dias sailed around the beautiful Cape of Good Hope which is south of present city of Cape Town. Because of his explorations, European interest was stimulated to continue the exploration and development of the southern part of Africa. However, it was not until 1580 that the Dutchman, Cornelis de Houtman, carried out trading with the local inhabitants of the region. He landed at Mossel Bay and did some trading with the Khoekhoen people.

In 1652 Jan van Riebeeck landed at Table Bay of the Cape. He established the first European settlement in South Africa. From 1688 to 1700 about 225 French Huguenots brought their culture to the Cape when they fled religious persecution in France. The first British residents moved to the Cape in 1795. A second British exodus arrived at the Cape in 1806. And by 1814 the Dutch permanently ceded the Cape to the British at the London Convention. Cape Town was on its way to becoming a major world city.

In 1815 Shaka became the chief of the Zulus in the eastern part of South Africa. By rigorous, and often cruel discipline, he created a war machine, and thus, became one of the first known tyrannical leaders of Africa. During the 1820s and 1830s black Africans throughout southern Africa were forced to migrate because of the rise of the Zulu Empire. Shaka adopted the “scorched earth policy,” and thus devastated

vast areas of land. He organized a reign of terror throughout all tribal groups in southern Africa, from which he built a great empire.

In 1824 the first white settlers migrated into the territory of Shaka's kingdom. They settled in the area around Port Natal. In 1828 Shaka was assassinated and his half-brother, Dingane, became the king of the Zulu kingdom. From this time until 1838 skirmishes continually occurred between the Zulus and the early white settlers.

The Voortrekkers (pioneers) continued to move inland from the Cape and settle in areas of the Zulu kingdom. Conflict between the two groups continued to generate until a major battle with the Zulus occurred on December 9, 1838. With 464 men, the settlers held off an estimated Zulu army of over 12,000 warriors. No settler was killed in the battle, though over 3,000 Zulus died. This victory for the settlers essentially crushed Zulu sovereignty in the region and white South African sovereignty began to rise over all of South Africa.

Between 1867 and 1870 diamonds were discovered at Hopetown in the Orange Free State Republic, and also at Du Toits Pan near the present day city of Kimberley. In 1877 the British annexed the South African Republic, and tension began to mount between Britain and the white South Africans. Subsequently, war broke out between the "boers" (Afrikaans for "farmer") and the British. This first Anglo-Boer War occurred in 1880 and 1881. As a result of this war, the Transvaal regained its independence when the British signed the Pretoria Convention.

In 1886 rich gold deposits were discovered in the Witwatersrand of central-eastern South Africa. As a result, the city of Johannesburg was founded which has since become the major financial capital of the southern part of the continent.

In 1899 the country was again in an Anglo-Boer War. Transvaal and the Orange Free State went to war with the British from 1899 to 1902. The war did not go well for the Boers, so the British gave them their independence because they put up a good fight. The signing of the Peace Treaty of Vereeniging ended this war with Britain.

In 1912 the South African Native National Congress was founded. In 1923 the name of this political group was changed to the African

National Congress (ANC). Throughout the twentieth century, the black South African struggled for recognition and political rights. After almost three centuries of oppression, their dream was finally realized on April 27, 1994 when the first all South African democratic elections were held in the country. The first nonwhite president, Nelson Mandela, was elected president in this election.

In 1994, South Africa came into a new era. It is an era where a “New South Africa” is being constructed. Cultural barriers are being changed or torn down. A sense of freedom permeates the air as the citizens of the country struggle to forget the past and forge toward a new future. It is a country being born again. It is a time of change; it is a time for opportunity and hope.

### **Planting New Roots**

When we left for South Africa, our two oldest children, Angella and Matthew, remained in the States. Only Cindy and Lisa came with us to establish a new home in a new country and on the third continent where we would live. I must say that it was very brave on the part of these two teenagers to leave good friends in West Monroe, Louisiana in order to follow the dreams of their father and mother. It was hard for them to make the transition, but through the strength of God, they made the move. I believe Cindy and Lisa did something that is very unusual for teenagers to do. As teenagers, Angella and Matthew had done the same in our moving around Latin America, and now it was Cindy and Lisa’s turn in their teens to follow God’s call.

Throughout the years, our family was a moving family simply because of the nature of what we were doing. As God continued to increase our ministry, He continued to move us to where we could do greater works. Only military people moved as much as we did. The blessing to our children was that they developed an international flavor in their culture.

As I look back on our move to Cape Town, I will always remember how smooth the move went. Packing up in West Monroe and arriving in Cape Town could not have been easier. I knew that God knew we needed an easy transition. At the time, we remembered thinking

that God wanted this move because it was so smooth. We had in our lives by this time started looking at God's work around us. Instead of seeing His work in our past, we were beginning to be perceptive to His work in the present.

I have always had the policy in our family that we must do what is necessary to do in order to get the job done. Upon this foundation, our two youngest daughters and Martha, packed up and we went forth again into a new work. Martha had never been to Africa. Neither had Cindy and Lisa. They just packed up their suitcases, boarded a jet for Africa, and went. When the job must get done, get on with doing the job. World evangelism is not a matter of pleasing friends, and even family. It is a work of saving souls for eternity. If an evangelist is not willing to make the sacrifices of leaving lands, family, fathers and mothers, then he should not call himself a world evangelist. An evangelist is one who has to do the work of an evangelist. And the work of an evangelist is to go about evangelizing. Unfortunately, there are too many who want to be world evangelists, but they do not want to "go about."

### **Seminars And Writing**

In going to South Africa we ventured across the Atlantic and to the bottom of the continent in order to establish the international base of our outreach to the continent of Africa. From the day of our arrival, we began a romance with Africa that is known only by those who have been touched by the intriguing mystique of the African culture. We arrived where only storybook adventurers had gone. We had set our feet on the soil of Livingstone, Kruger, Stanley and a host of other historical characters of African tales of yesteryear. We had actually come into the realm of pioneer missionaries who had blazed the trails of evangelism decades before our arrival. We were now in Africa and I remember in those first years that I felt great about being on the continent. The first two or three years were very exciting as we planted roots in a new field of work. When God started opening so many doors we knew that we had made the right decision.

The church in Bellville, Cape Town had the facilities where we could initiate the base of the Institute, though plans had been made to

eventually find a permanent facility and location. However, because of the invitation of the Bellville church, we were on our way to establishing on the continent a growing ministry that had been started ten years before on the island of Antigua in the West Indies in 1980, but conceived in the days we lived in Brazil. God had taken us from the limits of the West Indian area to the vast extent of Africa and beyond.

I had at the time traveled to countless countries on four continents. When we landed in Cape Town, I had to confess that the beautiful Cape was the fairest of them all. To seafarers of the past, this city which was nestled at the foot of Table Mountain, surely brought to them the same scenic relief that it brought to my family when we arrived. The Mountain was a beacon that signaled encouragement to us as we docked in for the continuation of the work of the Institute.

South Africa is a land that is vastly different from its neighbors to the north. It is a unique environment of divergent cultures, vast economics and different languages. It is truly the motto of its advertisements, “A world in one country.” Greatly misunderstood by the outside world at the time, South Africa survived the onslaught of world sanctions and isolation during the years of apartheid. Though rejected and snubbed as a misfit child by most countries of the world, the survival instinct of this country caused it to emerge as the breadbasket and economic stronghold of all southern Africa. One of the greatest things that ever happened to the country in its development as a country were the years of sanctions by the rest of the world. The sanctions taught the South Africans a sense of self-reliance. They thus developed within the country without having their hand out to others, as is so common among the neighboring countries to the north. The greatness of the country now is that within the culture there is a strong self-determination for nation building.

Because of its influence on the southern countries of Africa, we chose it as the base of Africa International Missions. From here the vital functions of printing and postal mailing could be carried out to reach the world through our ministries. It was the right choice, though at the time we had questions about moving to South Africa for the type of work we were doing.

Many things transpired after our arrival. Sanctions against South Africa have long ago fallen and countries throughout the world have once again established political and economic ties with the country. When we arrived, only two airlines flew into Cape Town International Airport. Now there are over twenty with over sixty-five flights a day. Within two years after our arrival, the courses of the Institute were being air mailed to over thirty countries. God had led us correctly by taking the Institute to South Africa. Since the work was of God, it was God who opened the door in 1989. It was God who brought us to Cape Town from which we dreamed of reaching a continent.

We feel strongly that God led the Institute to Cape Town. Past accomplishments can only be answered in understanding the work of God in our lives. He certainly performed in our lives exceedingly abundantly above all that we dreamed. I am a dreamer, but one can never out dream God. If you dream big, then look out. God will take your little dreams on to something that you never thought was possible. My life is a testimony to that fact.

## **Chapter 2**

### **OUT OF THE CAPE**

Before we moved to Cape Town, we owned a 1967 Piper Twin Comanche that we were going to use in returning the base of the Institute to the West Indies. However, when the door opened to move to Africa we sold the airplane and made our move. I knew that we would not need an airplane in Africa for at least the first year and a half of the work. After that first year and a half, requests for seminars and meetings would begin. In order to traverse the vast distances of the southern part of the continent, I knew that an airplane would be a necessary tool to accomplish our proposed plans of getting the concept of the Institute introduced on African soil.

So by the end of 1990 I knew that the time had come to get back into the air. Because of the courses we were distributing, and the impact of the *International New Testament Study Commentary* that I had published and distributed throughout Africa in 1987, some very unique

opportunities were opening up. I had made contact with key preacher and leadership training schools in the southern part of the continent before our arrival and in the first two years we lived in Cape Town. Through their invitations I was able to teach special Bible seminars throughout South Africa, Malawi, Botswana, Kenya, Zambia, Zimbabwe, and Swaziland.

The problem in teaching seminars in southern Africa was distance. Cape Town was always two-day's journey from where one starts to go on a journey. Nevertheless, I conducted seminars throughout the southern part of the continent by making some very long trips that took weeks in travel. I could write about many. As an example of these trips, I remember one of those journeys Martha and I made in April 1991 up to Venda in the far northeast part of South Africa and through Swaziland. It was one of those first long trips where both of us continued to learn about Africa and come into contact with those we were seeking to help through our ministries.

### **Venturing To Venda**

Venda is a 25-hour trek from Cape Town. Our journey on this particular trip began one clear Wednesday evening at about 9:00<sup>PM</sup>. Martha and I huddled away into our Toyota Hiace van and began our voyage to the north, as the sun slithered over the western horizon. We made our way through the Hottentot's Holland Mountains, and in darkness through the Karoo Desert. It was 3:00<sup>AM</sup> in the morning when we finally gave up at an isolated place called Three Sisters. Both of us cuddled away in the back of the van on foam mattresses, and after three hours of restless sleep, we washed our tired faces, fueled up, and continued our journey on to Johannesburg, ten hours to the northeast.

After getting lost in the five o'clock traffic amongst the six million or so in Johannesburg, we finally searched our way to the house of missionaries John and Beth Reese and collapsed. That evening we endured a Kansas thunderstorm that is so typical of the highveld (highland) areas of eastern South Africa. Nevertheless, we were thankful for a real bed and the great hospitality of John and Beth.

The next morning it was back in our traveling cocoon and on to

the small nation of Venda with John and Beth to conduct a seminar for the preachers and leaders. After a short six-hour venture, we arrived at a local camping ground where we pitched our tents and settled in for the night. We were there for a special workshop that was hosted by the Tshidimbini church of Venda.

Both John and I began the workshop that night with lectures on the gospel and Bible correspondence course outreach. On Saturday the main thrust of the workshop geared up at 9:00<sup>AM</sup>. Speakers Nigel Hausberger, Patrick Kenée, and Steve Gilliam arrived from Johannesburg, and together we had a good day of teaching.

Over two hundred local church leaders attended. They represented over twenty churches of the Venda area. While we men focused on the men, Martha, Beth Reese, Kelly Dyess, and Cheryl Kenée taught the ladies. On Sunday they taught over two hundred children who were divided into three classes.

The Tshidimbini church killed the fatted calf and fed for two days the over two hundred visitors who were present for the workshop. This was commendable for an African church. This was also the only church at the time in Venda that had elders. Such was a testimony to the maturity and growth of this church from the time of its initial establishment over thirty years before our arrival in 1990.

This particular workshop was a first for the Tshidimbini area. It was hosted by a local Venda church. The Tshidimbini church supported it entirely on its own, even to the selection of subjects. All we had to do was show up and give the lessons. In the years that followed, I conducted several seminars in this area that were hosted by this great church. At the time they were led by Obrien Malindi, a great man of God and very dedicated worker. He is one of the great African leaders with whom I have had the privilege of having a long relationship in the work of the Lord. Africa is filled with evangelists as this, and as a result, great things started to happen in Venda.

I had to repent from my campsite experiences in those early days in Venda. When we conducted the preceding seminar we all stayed at a campsite in Thohoyandou. We did so because we did not know better. When I went back for later seminars, I was asked to stay with Obrien.

He once asked me why I stayed at the campsite in the first visits. I had no answer, so I just said, "I didn't know any better." Since the early '90s, therefore, when we ventured through Venda, we always stayed with the Venda brethren. Several others have also made trips to this area. And since then, we have always stayed with O'Brien or other members of the church. O'Brien taught me a great lesson. When we stayed at the campsite, it was offensive to the Venda people. They are so hospitable that it is only natural that travelers stay in their homes. If you are a brother in Christ, when you travel to Venda to work with the church, be sure not to stay in a hotel. In general, I have found that African brethren are very hospitable, more so than in most places I have traveled throughout the world. They have a very generous heart, and thus want to spend time with any visitors who may come by.

### **On To Swaziland**

After a few mosquito bitten nights in Venda, Martha and I packed up the van and headed for Swaziland where we would conduct another seminar for the Manzini Bible School. On our trip to Swaziland, we made a relaxing adventure through the Kruger Game Reserve. This is the reserve the British government started in 1889 to set aside a large segment of land for the preservation of African wildlife. We camped in Kruger under the stars and listened to the wild calls of the African night.

After an early awakening and the usual hot chocolate, we were off. Creeping down the road at 35<sup>mph</sup> gives one the opportunity of seeing Africa for what it must have been in years past before hunters almost brought to extinction precious species of God's creation. On the road, we approached two large elephants who reminded us that we were in their homeland and that they were there first. We also came over a hill where there were eight lions taking their morning nap in the middle of the road. I pulled the van up into the middle of the lazy crowd and shut off the engine. We just sat there. I rolled down my window and they were right there looking me in the eye. Martha was somewhat excited at about this time. Nevertheless, after they decided that we were only passing through, they all wandered off to the side and allowed us to pass.

After three nights camping through Kruger, we finally made our way to the border of Swaziland, and then on to the Manzini Bible School. We stayed with Coleman and Jane Richardson who were there for six months, dedicating part of their retirement to the Lord in this part of God's vineyard. Dick van Dyke was also working with the Bible School and the Manzini church at the time. Throughout those early years in trips to Swaziland, we had several opportunities to work with the van Dykes and the Mickey Figueiredos.

The Manzini Bible School was started in the 60's. Under the direction of Samson Shandu at that time, they had twelve students when we visited. The school was located in a valley setting that is surrounded by mountains. This was our first time to Swaziland, so we thoroughly enjoyed this small country with a population of less than one million people. At the time we were there, it was ruled by a new king who was only twenty-five years of age.

After three days on the road, it was good to be in real beds and in the protection of walls that guarded one from mosquitos and such like creatures that always torment one while camping in the bush. It was also good to be in a place of good food. I remember that the food in Swaziland in those days was about half the price it was in South Africa. It was an opportunity, therefore, to take advantage of a good filet mignon steak.

Swaziland is a beautiful country, with rolling green mountains and valleys of beautiful flowers and orchards. Economically speaking, Swaziland was one of the stronger countries of Africa, though this would be in comparison with other Developing World countries, not the developed world.

By this time on our journey, both Martha and I were ready for home. Therefore, after completing the final lectures at high noon on Monday, we were off in our "traveling tent" for the beautiful Cape. We traveled on into the night, for it was a good eighteen-hour trip to Cape Town.

At the beginning of our trip, we encountered the fringes of a hurricane which was off the eastern coast of Africa in the Indian Ocean. It was spewing moisture into the eastern part of southern Africa and

drenching the highlands with rain. We stopped in blinding rain and ate at one of those restaurants in the middle of nowhere. I did not know the town in which we stopped, and to this day I could not tell you. It was raining so hard that we just stopped where we saw a sign that read, "Restaurant." After the rain had subsided, we were off again and finally landed around 10:30<sup>PM</sup> at a petrol station outside the city of Bloemfontein, South Africa. We again nested in the back of our traveling tent and made our way off into dreamland.

Five-thirty came early the next morning. Again, after a face washing in the local petrol station bathroom, we were revived and on our way for another 10-hour trek back to Cape Town. Why is it that the last leg of any journey takes so long? Nevertheless, our persistence paid off and we finally pulled into our home driveway. The welcoming hugs of Cindy and Lisa gave us a sense of relief and the realization of how much we had missed them. Our mission was accomplished. We then settled back to consider the next trip for workshops and seminars.

It was at this time that I was seriously contemplating the purchase of an airplane. There had to be a better way of travel the vast distances of southern Africa than spending mega-hours behind a steering wheel bouncing down an endless trail that stretched over the horizon. So by May 1991, the search was on for wings.

### **Great Open Doors**

The first of 1991 we experimented with a small advertisement in a newspaper. Missionaries Clay Hart and Ron Potberg placed the ad to attract preachers and teachers of the religious world to the courses of the Institute. From the ad we enrolled approximately twenty preachers of various religious groups. Because of this response, we knew we had an opportunity through the Institute to reach the religious leaders of the African continent. It was an open door that we knew we had to enter, though at the time we did not have the financial resources to meet the need. Nevertheless, we knew what the potential was and how to get to those religious leaders out there who were hungering and thirsting after the word of God.

The following letters from one of our students in Nigeria illus-

trated the tremendous open doors that were opening for us through the outreach of the Institute. In June 1991, one preacher wrote,

*Dear Mr. Dickson,*

*Greetings to you in the name of our dear Lord and Savior. I trust you are in good condition of health. I am very glad to receive your good letter on February 8<sup>th</sup>. I have just finished three days lectureship with the Apostolic Church of Christ at Oje in Ibadan City [in Nigeria]. I'm trying to change the African Apostolic Church of Christ to the church of Christ in order to restore the New Testament church. Their pastor here agrees with me over this issue, but I would like for you to write a letter to him personally in order for him to accept Bible doctrine and practice, not man-made doctrine and African practice. I'm serving as a part-time preacher at the African Apostolic Church of Christ and New Life Gospel Church, all in Ibadan City. But I hope to be a full-time preacher at the African Apostolic Church of Christ when they promise to accept the doctrine of Christ and change to the church of Christ in name, doctrine, and practice. Please remember me in your daily prayers in order to achieve my aim in the field. In fact, my greatest determination is to continue spreading the gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ as pure as it came out of His lips.*

About two months later this same preacher wrote the following:

*Dear Mr. Dickson,*

*Greetings to you in Jesus' name. Hope you are in good condition of health. Happy to receive from you the courses.*

*Sir, it is a great blessing that the Unity Africa Apostolic Church of Christ at Oje has been converted to the church of Christ recently, though we lost some of the old members of that denominational church. However, the church at present is about forty members. Please always remember us in your daily prayers.*

This one case illustrated the inroads we had and still are having into the religious world of Africa. The preachers of such churches have

the same problem as our men. They are isolated. They are searching for study materials. They are looking for something to preach and teach every Sunday morning. If we send them our materials, then they are preaching and teaching our materials.

This need was brought home to me when I conducted a meeting with several religious leaders in a small town in rural South Africa. In the meeting, one of the preachers stated the need when he said, “We were sincere in starting our churches in our communities of those who wanted to serve God. But we as preachers have never had an opportunity to have in-depth study of the Bible ourselves.”

Multiply the above a thousand times over and you will get some idea of our excitement in working with the outreach of the Institute. Through distance training we could go with in-depth biblical studies where no resident program could go. Martha and I have found it hard to explain the tremendous advantage of biblical studies through distance training. Religious leaders of different groups cannot come to our resident schools and receive Bible training. However, we can take courses by distance training to them. In this way, we were in those days having a phenomenal impact on the religious world of Africa because the leaders were receiving materials from Africa International Missions. God was working to lead spiritually minded men closer to the truth through the materials we were sending them. It was truly a fantastic ministry to thousands of people.

When African countries went through the years of gaining their independence in the ‘60s and ‘70s, thousands of African independent churches emerged throughout the continent. These churches emerged because they were seeking independence from colonial influence and colonial religious structures. During these years of emergence, African traditional spiritism and animism were often mingled with biblical truths. As a result, an “African Christianity” emerged with a little flavor of Christianity that was mixed with some African spiritism and animism. Some of the groups have moved from the basic concepts of Christianity. On the other hand, there are those who continue to seek to study their Bibles and follow what God says in the Bible. And herein lies a great opportunity. It was an opportunity for a ministry as Africa Inter-

national Missions, specifically through the work of distance training. Through the Institute we were offering biblical material to “Apollos” teachers who were teaching thousands of people. As stated before, any literature one receives in a Developing World environment, is studied and taught to others.

### **Back To America For Wings**

After the Institute was in operation for a little over a year in Cape Town, I decided it was time to go back to the States in May of 1991 and purchase an aircraft for the work. Therefore, on May 4, 1991, I was in God’s hands with a one-way ticket on a British Airways flight out of Cape Town that was destined for America. With great anxiety I began this trip. There was so much I had to do in the States in six weeks. Missionaries should go back to the States with only one thing to accomplish. On this trip, I had about ten projects on my plate that had to be accomplished. This was probably the most anxious trip I ever made back to the States, simply because so much had to be done in such a short time.

Martha and I always had a chuckle with South Africans in reference to our trips to the States. They would always ask, “Are you going on holiday?” I suppose this is what you would expect of those who go on trips overseas only for holidays. After answering that question in the negative for so many years, we gave up, knowing that they would never understand the nature of our visits to the States as supported missionaries out of the States. It was never a holiday. When we returned from the trip to the States, it was then that we went on holiday for a couple weeks.

On most six week trips I would have thirty-five to forty speaking engagements and at least that many luncheons with different people in order to discuss the work in Africa. My family and I would live out of suitcases, traveling from one bed to another, from town to town. Funds had to be raised for the work and supporters had to be visited. I enjoyed the change in work, but it was difficult for the family, especially when they were very young. What was encouraging about such trips, however, was encouraging brethren about what great things God was

doing among the nations. The thrill of visiting the work of God is to witness what God does in men's hearts.

### Chapter 3

## FLIGHT ACROSS THE POND

In 1995 I published through J.C. Choate Publications a book entitled *African Missionary Pilot*. In the book I explained some of our wanderings through Africa by flight. Portions of that book are drafted into this book in order to give you some idea of our adventures throughout Africa with the airplane that I purchased in 1991 for the work. The following is an extract from that book wherein I wrote concerning the task of returning to the States in 1991 in order to find our wings for Africa.

### The Great Flight

As previously stated, on May 4, 1991 a British Airways 747 lifted its commanding feet from D.F. Malan International Airport in Cape Town. In an economy class seat, I sat wondering how God would again work in my life concerning the purchase of an airplane for the work of the Institute. A thousand plans clogged my mind. Where would we get the airplane? How long would it take to find one? How long would it take to stuff it full of auxiliary fuel tanks and navigational equipment in order to fly it across the Atlantic? (Was I really planning this trip?)

And then there was the flight across the Atlantic and down through Africa. That flight laid on my mind heavily on my way to the States. I had a lot of over-water flying in my logbook because of my flying in the West Indies. However, the great flight I was considering had given me some anxiety simply because I had never done such before. This had to be another flight of faith, a time when faith had to overcome fear.

Before I left Cape Town, I had laid a great deal of ground work for the purchase of the airplane. Our needs for travel called for long distance hops of two teachers and literature. We needed an economical airplane that would be able to fly out from our base about 600-800

miles, and then get back without refueling. Since all our flying would be over land, I decided to forego the operating expenses of a twin-engined airplane. I considered a Mooney 201, a Piper Arrow, a Cessna 182RG, and possibly a Commanche 260B. We had previously owned a Commanche 260B in the early days of the Institute in the West Indies. All these airplanes would be good choices for our work. All have their advantages and disadvantages. Nevertheless, after considering the pros and cons of these four, I decided on the Mooney 201, which decision proved to be the best.

I had decided to purchase a 1978 or 1979 Mooney 201 primarily because of speed, economy and the fact that it could be modified with auxiliary fuel tanks that would give it over ten hours of flying time. At 185<sup>mph</sup>, it would thus cover a lot of bush and go much further than my bladder in ten plus hours.

### **The Right Airplane**

Before I left Cape Town, I wondered how God would put everything together for the two-month stay in the States. I had to raise funds for the Institute because the 1989 two-year commitment of supporters was coming to an end. I had to buy an airplane. I had to have an annual inspection of the airplane and have the instruments IFR (Instrument Flights Rules) certified. I had to modify it with long range tanks and install a ferry tank for the flight across the Big Pond – the Atlantic. I had to install a High Frequency Radio (HF) and purchase a Global Positioning System (GPS) for navigation. I needed a plane with a newly overhauled engine and one in excellent mechanical condition. I also wanted one with good paint. Was I asking too much of God?

On top of the above, I also needed to get my Airman's Medical Certificate brought up to date. I also needed to do my Biannual Flight Review, and then get an IFR check ride in the airplane which I would purchase. And then there was the wrangle of paper work and documentation necessary for taking the airplane to a foreign country. You would not believe the Canadian list of survival requirements for crossing the Atlantic. My mind was boggling. All of this was in conjunction with finding sponsors for about 165 Institute students and visiting over

twenty churches. I also had to get our house in West Monroe repaired and put on the market for sale. There were a host of other trivialities that had to be done in the eight short weeks I was to be in the States.

The problem I often encounter with my faith is that I sometimes allow it to subside in the present. Anxiety thus arises. However, when I look back, the foolishness of my anxiety is always manifested as I see how God has so wonderfully worked in my life. I suppose we never really learn. As a farmer, I grew up to be self-sufficient. This cultural trait never ceases at times to displace faith and total dependence on God in order to depend on myself. I have sometimes struggled with the “be-not-anxious-for-the-morrow” nature of faith that would settle the butterflies and calm the nerves. My remedy for my insufficiency in faith, however, has always been to press on regardless of apprehension. I have always been one to press on outside the envelope, for it is there where God truly works, or at least it is there where one truly perceives the work of God in one’s life. It is there that we must truly walk by faith.

I have always been an incurable optimist who believes that everything somehow works out. If this is being a “fool for Christ,” then such a fool I am. Nevertheless, God continues to embarrass me with my foolish lack of faith by working strongly in my life. He continues to dig out my self-sufficiency as He gently manifests that it is He who is working all things together for good. On my tombstone let them write, **“Here lies a man whose struggle it was to displace self-sufficiency with faith.”**

### **God Answers Prayers**

During the first two weeks in the States, God worked wonders in my life. While in Africa, I had discussed with Martha the type of airplane we needed for the work. Because of price, we had narrowed it down to a 1978 or 1979 Mooney 201. It had to have the basic aircraft instrumentation. I wanted to get an airplane with a recent major overhaul on the engine and a recent annual inspection. I also wanted to try and find one that had been kept in a hanger all its life. It would also be good to have one, I thought, that had been owned by only one man all

its life. And I had to be cautious that I was not getting one with problems that someone was trying to sell off. I also wanted one with good paint and interior. I suppose I was asking a lot of God.



I arrived in Dallas, Texas Sunday afternoon, May 5, 1991. Believe it or not, after a series of phone calls that Sunday afternoon and Monday morning, I had by Monday afternoon put down a deposit on a 1978 Mooney that was in Paris, Texas, about a two hour drive from Dallas. It had a newly overhauled engine. It had been hangared all its life, had the basic radios, and had been a one-owner airplane. A new annual inspection came with the deal. It had excellent paint and a great interior. What more could I have wanted. I had the instruments IFR certified within a week. I had taken my flight medical, did my Biannual Flight Review, instrument competency and checked out in the Mooney by an instructor. In the same amount of time I also visited two churches, bought an HF radio for the airplane, lined up the modifications schedule for the long range tanks, and made an appointment to install the ferry tanks in Lakeland, Florida. When God works, He works heartily. I will never forget this little experience the rest of my life. Every puzzle fit together so neatly and on schedule. Oh, what a foolish doubter I was.

It was also at this time that I began to realize how much in some ways I had become attached to South Africa. I flew over to West Monroe, Louisiana to visit with my two oldest children, Angella and Matthew. I began to realize how much I had changed. Though I had moved to north Louisiana on three different occasions in the past to teach at the White's Ferry Road School of Biblical Studies, it was on this brief visit that I realized that this southern culture was certainly different from what I had become. Things operated so much slower than Cape Town.

I suppose I was at the time already getting homesick for the sweet breezes of the beautiful Cape. I felt millions of miles away from home.

It was then that I realized that Africa had a relentless hold on me. I could not escape its mystique. I longed for the end of my Stateside business in order to once again touch my feet on the dark continent. I missed the scenic sunrises over the Hottentot's Holland Mountains of Cape Town. I thus busied myself with the countless things I had to do in order to fly N201YC (Yankee Charlie), our newly purchased airplane, to its destiny in Africa. After two weeks in the States, I was ready to go home.

### **Flighting By Faith**

My odyssey of flight from North America to Africa was initially planned with the following route: From Hutchinson, Kansas, I planned a nonstop flight to Bangor, Maine. From there I would go on to Moncton, Canada, and then to the end of the world, St. Johns, Newfoundland. From St. Johns I would cross the "Big Pond" to the Azores Islands. From Santa Maria Island in the Azores, I would progress on to either Grand Canary Island or straight to Dakar, Senegal, wherever the weather dictated. I had the alternate plan to fly at night directly across the Sahara to Abidjan, Ivory Coast. From the Ivory Coast, whether I went to Dakar or across the Sahara, I would go across the Gulf of Guinea to Libreville, Gabon. From Libreville I would go out over water and around Angola, down the west of Africa to Windhoek, Namibia. From Windhoek it would be a direct flight to Upington, South Africa or direct to Fisantekraal Airport in Cape Town. That was the plan, but plans seem to never work the way they are planned.

The reaction of most people when I told them about the trip was somewhere between "You're crazy" and "Here's the phone number of a Doctor who greatly helped my insane brother." Before I left, Sandy Brock wrote a very interesting note in the Stafford, Kansas church bulletin,

*"We are indeed proud of Roger and the work he and Martha are doing. We missed seeing Martha as she stayed in South Africa to help keep the school running while Roger is away several weeks. Roger will solo a plane back in a few weeks. **Oh, My!!"***

After having secured all necessary equipment and mental stamina, I proceeded on June 26<sup>th</sup> to make my epic journey that some considered a foolish exercise of misguided faith. I also had my apprehensions. I suffered from some concern about doing something I had never done before. I was venturing into a twilight zone of the unexpected. However, I knew that the airplane would greatly aid our work in southern Africa, and so, this was not an option. Sometimes you have to do that which must be done in order to get the job done. You must push the envelope of faith until you realize that it is God working, and not the schemes of your own abilities.

### **Bangor, Main**

My flight commenced at 4:00<sup>AM</sup> June 26<sup>th</sup>, 1991 when Angella, my oldest, and I awoke and made our way to the Hutchinson, Kansas airport. Before the sun knew that it was another day, Yankee Charlie lifted her feet from the Hutch airport on the longest journey she would ever make. I'm sure she groaned, "Are you really making me do this," as her wheels tucked neatly under the wings on a climb to 9,000 feet.

It was a long leg to Maine. After nine and a half hours of nonstop flight, I pressed the "gear-down" switch to land in clear weather in Bangor, Maine. It had been a good trip in good weather. However, one of the dials on the number two VHF radio went bad. That gave me only one VHF radio and the HF radio by which to maintain communications with civilization.

Bangor is one of those out-of-the-way places where only people intentionally go. However, I was treated with great hospitality by the airport people. I bought there the required "immersion suit" that one must have for flying over the Atlantic. This mummy looking thing makes you float just in case you have to take an unexpected swim out there in the middle of the big deep blue. The water is so cold in the North Atlantic that without an immersion suit, one can last only about ten minutes in the water.

### **St. Johns, Newfoundland**

After a night in Bangor, it was on to Moncton, Canada where I had

to clear with the Canadian Safety Board for the great flight across the Atlantic. Two months of preparation helped me breeze through the inspection.

The Canadians required that single-engined aircraft carry a number of safety items. Among the items was an inflatable life raft. I had such a raft left over from my flying days in the Caribbean. Pilots were also to include in their survival kits life vests, mirror, flashlight, fishing string, hooks, etc. I remember counting that there were over twenty requirements on the safety list. All such things were to prepare one for an unexpected North Atlantic cruise in a life raft.

After Moncton, I flew a few hours to what seemed like the end of the world, St. Johns, Newfoundland. I guess if you wanted to get away from civilization, this would be the place to go.

On my way over to St. Johns, I flew around advancing thunderstorms that were moving in with a front from the northwest. The engine was running cold and rough on this trip, and upon landing I decided to have it checked. I called a radio man who pronounced my second radio handicapped, for one of the frequency dials had broken. However, he manually tuned it to the emergency frequency (121.5), to which it stayed for the remainder of the trip. We cleaned the injectors of the engine and discovered that my auxiliary fuel pump could be working better.

Twenty-five minutes after I landed in St. Johns, the fog rolled in and the visibility went to almost zero. I didn't need this. I met a ferry pilot who was stranded there and asked him how long he had been in St. Johns. He said four days. This was not encouraging. I was not a happy camper since there was the possibility of being held up here for days.

There is a great meteorological weather station in St. Johns for pilot briefings. This is where I spent my time until going to the hotel about 10:00<sup>PM</sup> that night. I scheduled a weather briefing for 7:00<sup>AM</sup> the next morning and hoped for the best, though I had resigned myself to stay in St. Johns until better weather. However, the forecast at the time was for a double front to move in. This was the one I had outrun in coming to St. Johns. If I was delayed the next morning, there was a

good chance that I would be in St. Johns for a week, since it was a slow moving front.

The next morning I awoke and made my way immediately to the hotel window. I threw back the curtains. It was so foggy you could not see across the hotel backyard. My heart sank. It was the pits because I knew it would probably get worse as thunderstorms were moving in from the northwest.

I headed for the airport and straight for the weather office. I met two other pilots who were flying a twin-engined Piper Seneca on a vacation over to Europe. They were going my direction to Santa Maria. (This was God's work as I will explain later.)

The fog did lift some. You could see about a quarter of a mile. Therefore, the Seneca pilots and I filed IFR flight plans and hoped the fog would continue to lift. They fired up and departed twenty minutes before me according to the flight control order of spacing. I had almost 160 gallons of fuel on board (about seventeen hours of flying), plus a life raft, survival gear, etc., etc. I was at least 300 pounds over gross weight limit for the airplane. Therefore, in hope of Africa, I lined up on Runway 16 and was able to see about halfway down the runway. It was foggy. I was a flying bomb headed for Africa. I poured the coals to the Lycoming IO-360 engine and was off. Africa, here I come.

After lift-off I was immediately in clouds and stayed there for about the next six hours. When I went to use my HF radio for communication over the seas, I discovered to my dismay that I could receive but not transmit. This was not good news since communication in trans-oceanic flying depends on a functioning HF radio. But in this situation, the Seneca pilot kindly relayed my positions to the Air Traffic Control while we were crossing the Atlantic. We had various conversations with one another which took away some of the feeling that you were out there over the Atlantic all alone. God does provide.

### **Santa Maria, Azores**

I had been told that the Santa Maria Air Traffic Control was super strict with the operation of one's HF radio. In other words, they would not let you go without it being in operation. I worried about this all the

way there. The pilots in the Seneca suggested that we talk them into allowing me to accompany them on to Lisbon, Portugal where I could have the radio repaired. From there I could proceed down through Africa. This became the alternate plan, though Lisbon was way out of the way. But what else could I do.

After almost ten hours of flight, and as the sun slowly slid over the western edge of the earth, I landed in Santa Maria thirty minutes ahead of the Seneca. The Seneca had taken off from St. Johns about twenty minutes before me and I had passed her up on the way to Santa Maria. Mooneys are fast airplanes.

I was tired when I landed at Santa Maria. I had been in the air for almost ten hours. And I worried about that HF radio. What would I do? Anyway, it was easy to go through immigration and customs. A guard at the airport, with whom I recalled my Portuguese, kindly took me to a nearby hotel. I checked in. I uncovered a beckoning bed, thanked God for a safe trip; and finished my flight planning for the next day. I tweaked off the light and felt a long way from home. I worried, "When are they going to get me for that inoperative HF."

The next day I was up early. I ate seeds for breakfast. I had brought all these seeds and granola bars for the trip just in case I could not find time and places to eat. Since I had left Hutchinson, I had no time to eat anything but these seeds and granola bars. I was about to sprout.

I wondered how I was going to get to the airport. But transportation was "provided" for me by some Argentine pilots who had flown in on a military flight from Argentina the previous night. They invited me to go in their van and away to the airport we went. God provides.

I had expectations of flying on to Grand Canary Island which was about five and a half hours southeast. The HF problem, however, still lingered. I had put on my captain's shirt and decided to use the confident approach, that is, act like nothing was wrong. No need to bother. We fly.

While I was in the States I had the opportunity to visit with a very well-known ferry pilot who briefed me and gave me all his planning information for making trans-Atlantic flights. He was sure a blessing. But one of the things he told me to do was to buy a captain's shirt with

all the sleeve bars that airline pilots have for dress purposes. So I ordered one. He said this was a sure way to make your way easily around airports. So on this nine-day trip, I would have the shirt on when I landed and was at airports. After takeoff, I would take the shirt off and lay it on the ferry tank in the back. About twenty minutes before landing, I would put it back on. I followed this procedure throughout the flight. It worked, but that shirt was quite awful when I landed in Cape Town.

After doing the immigration stuff and filing a flight plan at Santa Maria Airport, I refueled the plane. Yankee Charlie fired up and grumbled after the previous day's labor. With a little coaxing, the engine smoothed out and was convinced that she was going to do another day's hard work. The tower gave me clearance to depart and I was on my way. I thought of all that useless worry about the HF radio. No one had said a word and I was not the one to bring up the subject.

### **The Canary Islands**

Grand Canary is a tourist island for Europeans. I paid about \$4.00 a gallon for aviation fuel on this island in 1991, so it was not the place you would want to stop for a regular vacation in your private airplane. I enjoyed the hotel by the sea and decided to spend a night and a day in this ever so dry island. From Grand Canary I planned what would be the toughest leg of my journey, an all-night trip across the great Sahara Desert. I had been told to do this flight at night because of the dangers of being shot down by missiles in the troubled areas around Morocco. A ferry flight was shot down in 1985 and another in 1988. So experienced ferry pilots in the States said to fly at night with lights off and radio silence. That was what I planned to do.

After a day of rest, I went to the airport that evening to check out the weather. I planned to depart at about 9:00<sup>PM</sup> for Abidjan, Ivory Coast. However, after checking the weather, I discovered that at 6:00<sup>AM</sup> the next morning in Abidjon they were predicting 400 foot ceilings and stormy weather, not real good weather to fly into after a long night's flight. Therefore, I decided to fly on to Dakar, Senegal, about seven hours directly south of Grand Canary. So it was back to the hotel for

another night. The next morning I was up and to the airport. The weather looked great in Dakar, so off I went.

### **Dakar, Senegal**

Dakar, Senegal is one of those discouraging areas of the African Sahel, the belt of arid land that is along the southern part of the Sahara. It is dry. It is dusty. It was the first patch of Africa I had seen in two months. It looked good in its bad for this is Africa and the people were very friendly. Everyone from the customs officials down to the local guards wanted to go to the United States.

The thing I remember the most about Dakar was that I felt a long, long way away from home. I was ready to get to Cape Town. I felt lonely being there by myself and knowing no French by which to converse with the local residents. I prayed on the rocks of the beach that night that God give me patience in my desire to be at home in Cape Town.

I was apprehensive about the next day's flight across territory that was always in some trouble in Africa. It was a direct shot from Dakar to Abidjan. There had been some unrest in the area, especially during the Liberian civil war. However, Liberia would be off to my right. I would get up the next morning, file a direct flight plan, and make a straight shot for Abidjan, Ivory Coast. So the next morning I was up, ready, and to the airport. Yankee Charlie fired up calmly and was convinced that I was going to push her on to another long day.

### **Abidjan, Ivory Coast**

The flight from Dakar to Abidjan was great. It was my first leg over land since I left St. Johns. It was good to see trees and villages instead of clouds and waves.

There was an intertropical front in the area at the time. After about three hours of flight I was into the weather. I was in and out of weather all the way to Abidjan. I made an instrument approach into Abidjan and had a relaxing reception at the local Aero Club. Again, it was to the hotel, flight planning for the next day, and crash in bed. It was up the next morning, to the airport, weather, etc. and etc.

I was asked before the trip if someone was going with me. The fact was that someone could not have gone with me. With the back seat replaced with a 50-gallon ferry tank and the right seat filled with survival equipment, there was no room for another passenger. But this would not have been a flight for a passenger. It was too strenuous, too taxing on the nerves, and just too long. Ferry flights are not for passengers. Ferry pilots don't need that.

### **Libreville, Gabon**

The flight from Abidjan to Libreville, Gabon was to be a relaxing flight out across the Gulf of Guinea. As I took off from Abidjan, things were going great. When I lifted off from the airport, I heard the tower trying to contact me. I responded. They tried again. I responded again. I could hear them. They could not hear me. This cannot be happening. I thought, "Is my last radio on the blink." I started pushing a knob here, pulling something there. "This is not my day." Finally, I wiggled the jack of the mike and Abidjan responded to my calls. I was on my way.

The intertropical front was still in the area. After about thirty minutes of comfortable flight I was into the clouds. Then I was into the thunderstorms, rain and turbulence. For the next four hours I was in and out of weather, tossed around here and there. I flew the storms for a while and then they flew me. It is incredible how much water an aircraft engine can inhale and still keep on purring away. This leg of the journey was proving to be one of those memorable occasions.

I was tormented by mother nature. I needed relief. Finally, as I passed through the center of this tropical demon things loosened up. In another thirty minutes, I was heading toward the clear. After wrestling with the storm for four hours or so, I flew into clear weather and relaxed. And I was tired.

I was out there over the Gulf and about 150 miles from Libreville. I could finally settle back for an enjoyable ride on to Gabon. The weather was now great.

Splat! Something hit on the windshield of the airplane. It made a small dark speck. "What was that bug doing up here at 7,000 feet? These are certainly high flying African bugs. They must have turbo-

chargers.” Splat! There’s another. My mind began to query, “Is this a colony of high flying African super insects?” I checked the leading edges of the wings. Nothing there. Splat! Splat! “Oh no. It’s oil. What is going wrong here? The prop has broken a seal. But it’s a newly overhauled prop.” Splat! Splat! “No, it must be the front seal of the engine. What is the problem?” Splat! Splat! Splat! “If it’s the prop I will have to take it off and fly back to Abidjan, and then on to Cape Town. I want to go home.” Splat! Splat! Splat! “This cannot be happening. Are there any mechanics in Libreville? It must be something in the engine. If it is something serious with the engine, I will declare bankruptcy. Who wanted to buy this airplane in the first place?” Splat! Splat! Splat! I was playing serious mental games with the circumstances as the time passed. I felt submitted to the elements of man’s machines.

While squinting through the oil splatter on the windshield, I eventually squeaked Yankee Charlie into Libreville and expected a fatal diagnosis. Fortunately, Libreville had major repair facilities. Great! I felt reassured. I scurried my way to the nearest mechanic. Through a French interpreter I unveiled my leaky oil problem. We took off the engine cowlings, and sure enough, my engine looked like a soaked dog dripping with water. The mechanic didn’t help any when he said, “Oh my.” My heart sank beyond the bottom of the pits. I grumbled, “God, I know there is a reason for this.” Again, I was definitely not a happy camper.

First thing was to clean the engine. Next, with two mechanics looking on, I ran up the engine for a few minutes. They twisted their heads and looked here and there. I registered every expression on their faces from inside the cockpit. Suddenly, one of the mechanics motioned to stop the engine. He had found something. I shut down the engine and leaped out of the cockpit to his side in anxious expectation of a glimmer of hope.

“It looks like the gasket between the engine casing is leaking.” “Oh no,” I thought, “this means an engine tear-down just to replace a gasket. I’ll be stranded here forever. We’re talking about major time and major money. Can this be happening? Stranded in Gabon.” I felt as E.T., “H-o-m-e!”

“Wait,” the mechanic said, “Let’s tighten the bolts around the crankcase, reclean it, and run the engine up again.” After all the cleaning, I cranked Yankee Charlie up. But I had lost all hope. After a few minutes of running the engine at high rpm, the mechanic motioned to shut it down.

**No oil leak! “Hallelujah! Thank you, Lord!”** The tightening of the crankcase bolts resealed the gasket which had compressed since the major overhaul about one hundred hours previously. How do you spell relief? “N-o o-i-l l-e-a-k-s.”

I made my way to a nearby hotel and unraveled. That evening I walked the beach of Gabon. I prayed, asking God to forgive me for my anxiety. I knew that Martha must be worrying about where in the world I was. I did not tell her when I would leave the States so she would not worry. I had been flying for seven days. I felt I was on an odyssey which would go on forever. However, I needed to learn to cast all my cares upon my Father’s shoulders. I needed to learn to do what Peter commanded, “*Cast all your anxiety upon Him for He cares for you*” (1 Pt 5:7). I knew that, but when you are living on the edge you often question God because of your own insecurities.

I prayed that night that God use me to teach Africa through our ministry. I had been gone for so long that I was ready to get back into the work. I thanked God for my safety and for breaking the mold when He made me. I knew my brethren could not worry over too many more like me.

I, as an evangelist, could write a long chronicle of both fortunate and unfortunate experiences as a foreign evangelist. However, such foolish remembrances would tire you and tempt me from giving all glory to God, both for my life and my protection. On my flight out of Libreville, I wrote in my journal, “I am 8,000 feet out over the Atlantic Ocean, proceeding toward the country of Namibia. God is my copilot, so I will reach my destination for I feel destiny in my life. There is much to be done. A world to evangelize. A hope to announce to the hopeless.”

### **Walvis Bay, Namibia**

From Libreville to Walvis Bay, Namibia was ten and a half hours

flying time. This was the longest leg of the entire journey. At the initiation of the journey, I was sitting with the engine fired up and waiting to taxi on the runway at Libreville when the day was dawning. The airport authorities first drove the fire truck up and down the runway to chase off chickens and whatnot. The tower signaled that the airport was officially opened. I was off and into the air headed for Walvis Bay.

What concerned me the most on this ten and a half hour leg was the oil consumption of the engine. On the average, the engine was burning about one quart every four hours because the engine was newly overhauled. It had new cylinders from the overhaul that were not yet broke in. On this leg, it would be down to about three or four quarts by the end of the journey. That was fine, but I had wished that it was doing better than that.

My original plan was to go into Windhoek, Namibia. I did not know where Eros Airport was outside Windhoek, since it was listed only as the Airport of Windhoek. I had mistakenly set in the quadrants of the Rooikop Air Force Base outside Walvis Bay, thinking that it was near Eros.

This all added up to be an interesting arrival. I was heading to Walvis Bay, but talking to the Air Traffic Control over in Windhoek, about one hundred miles away. You might think that this is crazy. It is. Nevertheless, I landed in Walvis Bay and began to think that something was wrong. To my dismay I learned that I had been communicating with the wrong airport. So I made a phone call to Air Traffic Control in Windhoek and told them where I was. They relaxed and said that they had been wondering where I went. I asked them to find some forgiveness for me. No problem. They appreciated the call.

### **Alexander Bay, South Africa**

It was cold in Walvis Bay. Freezing! It was in the middle of the winter in the southern hemisphere in July in a desert place. Don't think it does not get cold in the desert.

Walvis Bay was still South African territory in 1991 and I remember that it felt great being back in South Africa. After a night in a warm hotel in relaxation, I was given a ride back to the airport with the help

of the young military personnel in the area. I was then off to Alexander Bay, South Africa.

While in Walvis Bay, I called Martha for the first time in about two weeks. She answered the phone, “Where are you in the States? We have been expecting a call from you to let us know when you were about to depart.” I responded, “I am in Walvis Bay, Namibia.” “What!” I told this surprised wife that I would be home in about four hours and that I would call her from the airport upon arrival. She sounded like I cheated her of all that worry that wives are to have for their “Indiana Jones husbands.”

I changed my earlier plans of going to Upington. Instead, I decided to go on to Alexander Bay, South Africa because I was unable to refuel in Walvis Bay. When I landed in Alexander Bay, no one was around the airport except the guard. I wondered what was going on. The guard called all the necessary personnel, customs and immigration, and I discovered that this airport was closed down on Saturdays. One is supposed to give prior notice before coming in, if arrival is expected on the weekends. Again, I found forgiveness from the great South African hospitality. Neither did they have fuel. However, it was only about two more hours flight on to Cape Town. I had burned off thirteen hours, and estimated that I had about four left.

### **Home At Last!**

The last few miles into Cape Town began with ice on the wings at 8,000 feet. There was a cold front in the area and I was in the clouds. I asked Air Traffic Control out of D.F. Malan International in Cape Town to give me a lower altitude. They could not unless I was in the clear, for I was over mountains. They did not want to fly me through a mountain and I didn't cherish the idea myself.

When I eventually came into the clear, I descended to 3,000 feet and worked my way around clouds, rain and through mountain passes. Visibility was terrible. Through the rain I could see about one mile. This was not a good feeling as I wiggled my way through the mountain passes. About ten miles out of Cape Town I broke through the rain and caught my first visions of the beautiful Cape. I want to tell you that

after nine days of flying every day in every condition, it was a great sight to see. I rejoiced. I told Malan Control that I had been gone forever and wanted to fly around and see the area. That I did. I felt a great sense of accomplishment, satisfaction and the sense of “a job well done.” When Yankee Charlie touched down at Fisantekraal Airport, I cannot explain in words what I felt. Let me assure you that it felt good. There is nothing like being home.

It was on Saturday when I landed. Now my problem was in how to let Martha know that I had landed. I had called Martha from Walvis Bay and said that I would be in. Ironically, however, I did not know how to contact her from Fisantekraal Airport, for the airport is a small one outside Durbanville. I did find a telephone, but I had no change in South African money. I went to someone there who was working on an airplane and he did not have change. I went to another. He did not have change. I couldn't believe that I had flown almost half way around the world and could not make it the last ten miles home because I didn't have twenty cents to make a telephone call. I eventually found a gentleman who was working on a helicopter at the airport that day who had a telephone in his hangar. I called Martha. I was home.

It had been nine days since I had left Hutchinson, Kansas. I had flown 64.5 hours and covered over 11,000 miles. At the time, I thought, “Don't ask me to do it again.” But I remember threatening Martha, “What about going the rest of the way around the world through India, China and Russia?” Until now, there has been complete radio silence from her. I suppose the last radio has gone dead.

## **Chapter 4**

### **SETTING OUT ACROSS A CONTINENT**

The nature of our work from the time we landed in Cape Town in 1989 was to focus on the continent of Africa. Some folks in South Africa sometimes had a difficult time understanding that our ministry was to the continent and not to Cape Town, or for that matter, South Africa. South Africa was only one country in the midst of fifty-two on the continent. Cape Town was only one city. My heart was in Africa,

especially with those preachers who were living in hostile and difficult situations. They were the ones who needed the help. Martha and I found that the church in Cape Town had been quite spoiled throughout the years because they had received so many blessings from other churches, especially those from America. When we went to South Africa, we determined to limit our ministry with the churches in Cape Town, and South Africa in general. Because we did this, we never for a moment lost our focus on the continent. To this day, our focus is still with those who are producing great church growth throughout the continent. Every ministry of Africa International Missions is still “international.” Our focus eventually moved to all the world through printing, and especially, the internet.

For this reason, it was necessary that I make frequent trips to be with those with whom we were working on the continent. This led to several seminar trips throughout the southern part of the continent during the ‘90s. At one time I was covering twelve countries a year. Throughout the following few chapters I would like to relate to you some of our experiences on these trips and the seminars that we conducted.

I wrote a book in 1998 entitled, *Preaching Through Africa*. The majority of the following content is from this book, though the book focused primarily on a trip I made through Africa in ‘97. As stated before, previous to this book I also wrote a book entitled, *African Missionary Pilot*. Portions of this book are also merged with the content of the former book in order to give our readers some idea of what was involved in our seminar trips throughout the southern part of Africa.

### **With God Across Africa**

I again set out across Africa alone with God in April, 1997 in order to conduct a series of seminars. The information that follows is a record of my experiences, adventures and opinions that resulted from five months on a seminar safari I made throughout eastern Africa from Cape Town, South Africa to Addis Ababa, Ethiopia and back. Some of the information are facts I believe should be recorded for the interest of those who are preparing to be evangelists into these parts of Africa.

Since I am an evangelist, and sometimes philosophical in my opinions, I have expressed some opinions about many things I experienced. You cannot expect me to write on a subject as this without expressing some opinions. I must warn you that foreign evangelists are some of the most opinionated people in the world. Or at least, their liberty of expressing their opinions is a misunderstanding of their passion for their work. So they often feel strong about their opinions. But please keep in mind that the opinions I express are mostly mine, though they are sometimes shared by others. I have simply recorded them in hope that others might want to consider another person's point of view.

Throughout the journey from one destination to another in 1997, I enjoyed the tremendous hospitality of brethren in Africa. I also picked up those fellow travelers along the way who offered treasured discussions and companionship. I ate every imaginable food. I tried to ask about everything I ate, but sometimes just gave up, and ate. I tried to keep myself healthy, and did so most of the time with the help of God who knew that I needed to make a lot of appointments here and there. To say the least, the trip was a great learning experience for me and one that I will treasure for the rest of my life. It is for this reason that I want to share these experiences with you. Africa has a lot to teach, and through the meager efforts of my pen I pray that she can teach you.

Africa is a challenging continent. It offers diversity to the extremes in government, culture, economics, language and roads. Traveling across Africa is definitely not boring. One can travel two hundred miles and be in a different culture, different language, and view a different landscape. There is not the same K-Mart, McDonalds, and Pizza Hut at every stop along the road. Africa means diversity. And if you like diversity, then you will love Africa. Diversity is one of those exciting things about the continent.

Throughout all the experiences of the '97 trip, my faith grew because of an awareness of God's companionship. There were certainly some people who questioned my sanity about making such a trip alone. The fact was that I was never alone. At least, I never felt being alone, for I was never outside the presence of God. I always felt His presence, and in some circumstances and in some situations, I cannot explain

how I got through on my own accord without Him being there for me. I can only say, “God was always there.”

I am, I suppose, what my oldest daughter, Angella, called me, “An Indiana Jones Dad.” But frankly, I am a strong believer in the work of God in one’s life. If we never have the faith to launch out, we will never do anything. If one’s life is ruled and controlled by fear, he or she will always be setting around wishing he had done this or that. I never wanted to live in my old age with regrets about things I should have done. If we call ourselves evangelists, then we must get on with the work. There is no time for fear and apprehension in a world that needs the gospel.

### **Lift Up Your Eyes And Look**

When Jesus was once alone with His disciples, He said to them, “Behold, I say to you, *lift up your eyes and look at the fields, for they are white already for harvest*” (Jn 4:35). Every concerned Christian who has taken the time to lift up his eyes and look at the fields of human hearts must be moved with compassion at what he sees. And being moved with compassion, he must step out of his comfort zone if necessary in order to do what disciples of Jesus are supposed to do. He must be a fisher of men.

There is a beauty about a white harvest that is ready for reaping. I grew up as a farm boy in the wheat belt of America in central Kansas. I can remember those anxious days before harvest when the wheat began to turn to what would eventually generate an intense few days of harvest. Those were anxious times before the harvest since we all wanted to get into the fields and get on with the harvest.

I suppose not everyone has had the natural experience of life in real harvests. If you have not, then it will be difficult for you to understand the metaphor of Jesus concerning the harvest of John 4. Jesus was not emphasizing the beauty of the fields. He was not emphasizing the fruit of labors. He saw the necessity of reapers being intensely earnest about what had to be done. Wheat farmers gaze upon the fields in the days before the actual harvest in order to determine the right time for the harvest. Their combines are repaired, fueled and ready. It is not

a time for peace of mind. It is not a time of relaxation and vacations. It is a time of readiness, for one must be ready to spring into action when the wheat is dry enough to cut.

Jesus' statement of John 4 was at the beginning of His ministry. At the time, the disciples were being prepared for action that would come into reality three years later when He would tell them, "Go!" For three years He prepared them to be harvesting machines. He fine-tuned them, and finally, fueled them with the power of the Holy Spirit. And when Peter stood up on the day of Pentecost and announced, "Let all the house of Israel know ...", the harvest was on. It hasn't stopped since.

There are always different times in our lives when we need to re-focus our attention on the harvest. We must renew our vision by recalling the mission of the Founder and Lord of the harvest. My trip through Africa in 1997 was a time to survey the harvest in order to prepare greater works for reaping in the future.

I will be the first to confess that my efforts are among the feeble. Nevertheless, I write these few lines in order to encourage some to lift up their eyes and look at the harvest fields of Africa. It is white unto harvest. When the wheat is over ripe, it falls to the ground. And so it is in Africa. Over ripe seed is falling to the ground. Reapers must be sent out now.

There is so much teaching to be done throughout the thousands of churches in Africa. The Ethiopian preacher, Behailu Abebe, stated, "What missionaries need to do is put themselves into a teaching work of training African leaders. We Africans can do the work. We need the teaching." Behailu was right. Many of the thousands of churches in Africa are in their first generation of existence. Therefore, the burden of what Jesus said to Peter has always been on my heart concerning infant churches. "*Feed My sheep*" (Jn 21:17). A great deal of the time Paul spent on his mission journeys was in "*strengthening the souls of the disciples, exhorting them to continue in the faith*" (At 14:22). This should be a major work of the evangelist.

In the years leading up to 1997, I had conducted several seminars in southern Africa. However, at the beginning of 1996 I wanted to do

something different. I wanted to do a five month journey throughout southern and eastern Africa for the purpose of strengthening the churches that they be encouraged to evangelize their areas. This was the foundation motive for the trip and one that continues to drive myself and others to conduct seminars throughout Africa. Though I today do not teach as many seminars as in the '90s, the material that we send out is our substitute for being present in the seminars. One sometimes has to become old enough to say it is enough. So for the last few years the efforts of Martha and myself have been in producing, printing and sending materials to those leaders in Africa who are doing the seminars. In 2015 we moved our printing from Cape Town to Nanjing, China and the Amity Printing Company.

In mid 1996 in preparation for the five-month trip of seminars I was planning, I sent out a general letter of my intentions to African churches and missionaries throughout southern and eastern Africa. I simply explained in the letter that I would like to serve them in any teaching or preaching capacity that might be of benefit to local churches and church leaders in their area. The response was overwhelming. Veteran missionary Fielden Allison in Mt. Elgon, Kenya wrote a very encouraging letter to me which I needed at the time to initiate the plan. In the letter he stated,

*We had an area wide church leader's meeting at our house yesterday. I shared with them your wanting to come to Mt. Elgon. They were so excited and thrilled that you will be coming. Many of them are enrolled in the Institute and they long to meet their teacher.*

So with similar encouragements, I set out to make final plans and preparations for the trip.

One of the faithful Uganda students of the Institute in Jinja, Uganda wrote,

*I was thrilled to learn that you are at last coming through Jinja, Uganda on a trip of service. I wish to let you know that the young church in Jinja received the same news with happiness and they are eager to meet you*

*when you come. I have learned much from you from a long distance, and now that you are coming, I am ready to learn much more. I will be at your feet.*

Africans are always too generous with their words. Nevertheless, I appreciated the host of letters of encouragement, for I had some anxiety about the trip in the beginning. Making such a trip alone by road in those days was not something one does many times in a lifetime. Therefore, I needed all the encouragement I could get. I thanked God for those brethren who continually gave me their encouragement in order to carry out His will.

After about eight months of correspondence, the schedule of meetings came together. The following schedule included the original plan of meetings and seminars, but also the many added meetings to the original schedule I had to conduct as the trip progressed. I anticipated some additions and cancellations on the way. There were no cancellations, but there were a lot of additions.

#### **April**

*International African Lectureship, Johannesburg, South Africa*  
*Seminar on Biblical Interpretation, Gaborone, Botswana*  
*Seminar on Galatians and Legalism, Manzini, Swaziland*  
*Seminar on Last Things, Venda, South Africa*  
*Gospel Meeting, Mutare, Zimbabwe*  
*Seminar on Servanthood Leadership, Mutare, Zimbabwe*  
*Africans Claiming Africa Conference, Chinhoyi, Zimbabwe*

#### **May**

*Seminar on Church Establishment, Migowi, Malawi*  
*Seminar on Biblical Interpretation and Seminar on Last Things, Thondwe, Malawi*  
*Seminar on New Testament Evangelistic Methods, Lilongwe, Malawi*  
*Seminar on Evangelism, Mzuzu Bible College, Mzuzu, Malawi*  
*Seminar on Evangelism & Last Things, Central church, Mzuzu, Malawi*  
*Seminar on New Testament Evangelistic Methods, Malindi, Kenya*

#### **June**

*Seminar on Last Things, Addis Ababa, Ethiopia*  
*Church Planting Seminar & Evangelism, Sudanese church, Addis Ababa, Ethiopia*  
 Lecture series with Christian School, Addis Ababa  
*Seminar on Evangelism & Last Things, Addis Mission Compound, Addis Ababa*  
*Seminar on New Testament Missions, Jajura, Ethiopia*  
*Seminar on New Testament Missions, Mazoria, Ethiopia*  
*Seminar on New Testament Missions, Santeria, Ethiopia*

Campaign Lectures, Eastleigh, Nairobi, Kenya  
*Seminar on Biblical Interpretation*, Nairobi, Kenya  
*Seminar on Romans and Galatians*, Kisumu, Kenya

### **July**

*Seminar on New Testament Mission Methods*, Eldoret, Kenya  
*Seminar on Acts and Biblical Interpretation*, Mt. Elgon, Kenya  
*Seminar on Last Things*, Ngora, Uganda  
*Seminar on New Testament Mission Methods*, Mbale, Uganda  
*Seminar on New Testament Mission Methods*, Jinja, Uganda  
*Seminar on The Sovereignty of Deity*, Mungwi, Zambia

### **August**

*Seminar on The Sovereignty of Deity*, Lusaka, Zambia  
*Seminar on Church Leadership*, Kalomo, Zambia  
*Seminar on New Testament Evangelistic Methods*, Shakawe, Botswana

I had originally planned some break time during the above series of meetings. However, the breaks never happened as brethren who found out that I was traveling through particular areas, requested seminars. Therefore, before the trip was over I had added seminars at the Mzuzu Bible School, Mzuzu, Malawi and the Lubagha Mission, Rumphi Malawi. I added four more seminars in Ethiopia, with a series of lessons for the Christian school in Addis Ababa and a four day series of studies with the Christian school of the Eastleigh church in Nairobi, Kenya. I also added a series with the Namwianga Mission in Kalomo, Zambia. By the time I finished, I had conducted thirty-three seminars and meetings from one to five days in length during the five months of travel. I had the opportunity of teaching the preachers and leaders of about 2,000 churches in these seminars in eleven countries. It was a challenging trip, and opportunity I had never had before and one that few people have experienced. I can only give glory to God for having made it possible and giving me the physical strength to endure the legacy.

## **Paper Preparations**

How does one prepare to drive over 22,000 miles across Africa? Very carefully! Preparations for this trip began several months before departure. My original intentions were to drive from Cape Town to Cairo, Egypt, and then on to the Mediterranean Sea and back to Cape Town. I kept this dream alive during the planning, but my battles against logistics, red tape and civil war in eastern Sudan became my greatest

enemies, and thus, made it impossible to carry out my original desires. Nevertheless, I hoped against hope to the end, but wished that I could have made the time to accomplish the original plan. When coming back through Ethiopia on the trip, I passed about fifty motorcyclists who were making the Cape to Cairo trip in a group. I wished that I was with them on the way north. Maybe next time.

The only way to travel extensively in Africa is with a 4X4 vehicle. One does not need a 4X4 ninety-nine percent of the time. However, that other one percent you are stuck somewhere. And that somewhere is always out in the middle of nowhere. An acquaintance of mine in Cape Town once drove the west coast of Africa from Cape Town to the Ivory Coast. All went well except for the five days he was stuck in sand on the beaches of Angola. However, when driving Africa one does not need a 4X4 if he simply stays on the road. In these days one can travel throughout Africa on the main roads, which generally, are getting better. A 4X4 is needed only when one drives off the main roads.

I had a Nissan Twin Cab with a 2.7 turbo diesel. This was sufficient to carry the supply house of literature I needed to take for the classes, as well as, sufficient to get me through mud and sand and the usual truck-trenched roads of offbeat Africa. One of the most important necessities of the vehicle was high clearance, for many of the dirt roads I traveled had tremendous ruts and potholes. The roads that are used by trucks had been rutted out by the monsters in whose tracks one has to follow. Several times on the trip I was not on roads. I was in the middle of the bush somewhere driving down a foot path to an appointment with church leaders. At times I was in axle deep mud or sand that seemed to have no bottom.

In those days, preparing for the type of trip I took always took one through a maze of documents you would never think possible. In order to enter some countries in those years, one had to have what is called a *Carnet de Passages en Douane*. This is a “posting of bond” for your vehicle to make sure that you take it out of any country you may enter. If you sell the vehicle within the country, the government will get its share in taxes from your bank back home, for you must place in surety

in the country of origin enough money to pay the taxes if the vehicle is sold in another country.

How the *Carnet* works is that when you enter a country at customs, the customs officer takes a slip of paper out of your *Carnet* and stamps your book. When you leave the country, another slip is taken from your *Carnet* and you are again stamped. In this process, you must make sure you have the exit stamp. It is in this way that the customs of the country knows that you both entered and exited the country with the vehicle. It is a good system, but one that does cost. It is a system that prevents a lot of other documentation with temporary import permits for vehicles at borders. It is a very easy way to enter countries without any hassles.

At the time, it was best that one acquire an international driver's license for such trips. This was not difficult to acquire through the Automobile Association. The people at a good internationally acquainted AA will also get the *Carnet* for you. Just be sure to bring pictures of yourself.

Then there is the International Motoring Certificate. This is the registration of your vehicle on an international basis. One submits his local registration document of the vehicle in order to receive the International Motoring Certificate. Again, the AA can do this for you. On my trip I was never asked for this document. I suppose it is a good piece of paper to have. It is always good to have all these fancy documents with pretty stamps that look official.

You must also have insurance on your vehicle. Some insurance is sold that applies to several countries. Local insurance in the country of origin may not work. One would have to check on this with their local insurance company. Third party insurance is sold at many borders for a fee. Since the border third party insurance supports some people, whoever they may be, I have resigned myself to just paying for this insurance and moving on. African vehicle travelers have to get used to fees. Fees are like fleas when traveling in Africa. They are everywhere. I have resigned myself to the fees for everything at the border, figuring the border people have families to feed and the roads I use must be maintained.

But remember, African travel is international travel. Africa is not a country, it is a continent of countries. So there are visas. I suppose there is more nonsense surrounding regulations for visas into African countries than any other documentation. All of my passports have been farmed out to consulates and embassies at the same time on more than one occasion in order to acquire the proper visas for countries. When motoring through several countries, the date of entry into the countries before the expiration date of the visa can be quite challenging. On many visas, one must enter within thirty days of the date the visa is given. However, when you are driving you may not get to a certain country for two months or so. The visa has thus expired, and so you head for the consulate or embassy of the bordering country to which you intend to venture. I am sure this is a game some consulates and embassies play in order to get you to visit their embassy. I have always wondered why countries just do not give a visa that must be activated within a year. The duration of stay within the country could be activated upon initial entry, and that would be that. Does that sound too simple? I suppose Africa cannot be so simple, and especially, so logical. I have been traveling around African since 1982 and at least one thing has been learned. If it is logical, it is not African. TIA (This is Africa).

Therefore, when it comes to visas, it is sometimes best to find out if they can be acquired in the bordering country or at the border itself. Those that are given at the border are simply given and you proceed on your journey. Sometimes, if you have to go to the consulate or embassy in the bordering country, there is a one-day turn around. Just check before you leave. When taking pictures for documents, remember that there will be a flea ... I mean ... fee.

Doing documentation in Africa is most interesting. Here is a good illustration. I once took my passport to the Mozambique consulate in Cape Town in order to get a visa stamped in it. After the appropriate six to seven day waiting period, I returned to the office to get my passport.

Unfortunately, I had left the receipt at home which I had received when paying for the visa on the initial visit. Nevertheless, I asked for my passport and told the man that I was Roger Dickson. The gentle-

men across the counter replied, “Do you have your receipt?” “I do not,” I replied, but showed my South African identity document to prove I was who I said I was. He said, “It will be very difficult to find your passport without the receipt.” Nevertheless, he opened the little box where all the passports with approved visas were located. There was a sum total of five or six passports in the box. Mine was one of those many passports. Now then, to find which one it was must surely have been difficult.

“Are you an American?” was his next question. I assured him I was. My speech betrayed me. There was only one American passport amongst the horde of five or six passports. But this was to be very difficult. However, he saw mine by shuffling through all the passports. He gave it to me and I was on my way. I held my laughter until I was outside in the hallway.

I must also tell you the story that was told to me by a doctor Richard Foster, an acquaintance of mine in Angola. One of the doctor’s friends had driven across the Angolan/Namibian border in order to buy some supplies in Namibia. Upon his return to the border in order to reenter Angola, the unfortunate Angolan friend could not convince the border officer that he had just left the country and was returning. But all his “logic” was to no avail. So he turned around and went back into Namibia. As he was sitting in the Namibian customs office wondering what to do, he noticed the heel of his newly purchased shoes. There was a factory design on the rubber heel of his shoe.

So what do you do in Africa when you are stuck? You improvise. Foster’s friend said he had a ballpoint pen which he disassembled in order to extract the ink. He then rubbed the ink on the design of his heel. He placed his passport on the floor, stepped on it and made a good impression that really looked like an official “step,” I mean stamp. He then signed and dated the stamp, and headed back to the Angolan border. When the Angolan border official saw the correct date on the step, I mean stamp—forget the insignia of the design—he stamped the passport and everything was just fine. I can understand why a missionary friend of mine once had this rubber stamp made that read, “Official Stamp. Valid Anywhere.” TIA.

## Chapter 5

### VEHICLES FOR AFRICA

I grew up as a mechanic on a Kansas farm. In those days we were all gadget men as farm boys. I went to school to be trained as a mechanic. So putting around with vehicles is a relaxing pleasure that takes one's mind off the stresses of life. If you are not vehicle oriented or mechanically minded, I would suggest that you stay in the city and not drive Africa, especially in the bush. Extensive African bush travel in off-road conditions is not for you. It is not for you if you are to be the primary source of mechanical knowledge on a trip that will encounter the inevitable mechanical difficulties that are produced by Africa's relentless road attacks against your vehicle.

On our early seminar trips we went through two Toyota Hiaces. They were good vehicles for distance travel, but they were useless in real off-road Africa. On my seminar trip in '97 I drove the Nissan which was a 4X4 with high clearance because I had jacked it up for better ground clearance. There was sufficient power in the turbo diesel to get me down the main roads at 70<sup>mph</sup> and sufficient torque in low 4X4 drive to get me up the side of a mountain. At the same time, there was sufficient room for the necessary supplies for us to live a week on the road. However, on the '97 trip, I beat the Nissan to death. On more than one occasion I had to tighten the screws of the cab after pounding through some tracks that had no right to be called roads.

I suppose the best vehicle to have is a Toyota Land Cruiser or Nissan Patrol, though they do not have the interior room as a twin cab. Add to this the fact that you will have to forfeit your retirement to buy one of these in Africa. The Toyota 4X4 Raider Twin Cab or Nissan Twin Cab will accomplish about the same thing for half the price, but there is nothing as tough as a Cruiser or Patrol. Another good option is the Land Rover Defender. It is a little more expensive than the twin cab 4X4s, but it is a good vehicle for such a trip. My last vehicle was an extended cab Ford Ranger. It is one of the best vehicles for Africa. It is spacious. I built a bed in the back in which I comfortably slept regularly.

One thing that is always important to me is room in the vehicle. I want to be able to climb in the back somewhere and sleep when it is storming outside. The more expensive vehicles as the Land Cruiser and Land Rovers do not have as much room as the twin cabs when all the gear that is necessary for such a journey is also on board. However, the choice is the owners according to his or her likes and dislikes. My preference is the Ford Ranger. The main point is that one must not travel with junk in Africa. If you cannot afford a good vehicle for African overland travel, don't go. Junk will get you in trouble.

I simply believe that the most important thing to have in making excursions in Africa is a reliable vehicle. I have seen too many unfortunate tourists stuck in the outback waiting for a tow or mechanic to sort out a situation where they had an old relic of junk with which they should never have been there with in the first place. I remember these three German young people who had the adventuresome notion to travel Africa in an old Volkswagen van. They made it to the Caprivi Strip north of Botswana before the old lady said no more. They waited five days before a truck came along to tow them back to civilization. Unfortunately, the only tow rope they had was about ten feet long. They had to be towed about 250 miles to a repair shop behind this truck. By the time they reached us, the entire front of the van had been demolished by rocks from the tires the truck had kicked up before them. Windshield, paint, head lights and the works had been thoroughly blasted with rocks. We towed them on another thirty miles to the repair shop, but the vacation was already over for these unfortunate tourists.

I remember camping at a campsite in Keetmanshoop, Namibia. Besides myself, there was a couple at the campsite in a small tent. They had no vehicle, so curiosity got the best of me. I asked the lone campers where they were from and how they got there without a vehicle. The gentleman was from England and I believe the young lady was from Belgium. They met on the Internet, and agreed to fly to Durban, South Africa to meet. They then came over to Cape Town where they bought an old Voltswagon van. They had driven that old van all the way from Cape Town to about twenty miles north of Keetmanshoop when the weary engine of the van finally said no more. The unfortu-

nate travelers were thus camped in Keetmanshoop waiting for another engine to be shipped up from Cape Town.

They say that experienced travelers travel light. Good piece of advice. One usually never needs all the baggage you want to take. After years of travel experience, I have learned to use the one-spoon-one-fork-one-plate-one-cup principle. Of course, I do not always travel as this. But the principle is always to pack for one week. What will work for one week will work for the second, and third, and fourth. After all, you can wash clothes here and there. You can buy food. And who needs ten changes of clothes in Africa. I am a pilot and have been psychologically fine-tuned to always travel light. Ladies, you will argue with me on this point if you are not an experienced traveler in Africa. That's fine. But remember, while you are pulling a trailer of accessories out across the bush, I will be on down the way with the campsite set up, waiting for your arrival with a cup of tea in my hand.

Now I am one for practicality. On my seminar trips as a writer, I always wanted to be able to operate my computer on the road. Therefore, I installed a second battery in my vehicles where I could switch the computer on and off from the main electrical source. In other words, when I stopped overnight in the bush I could operate lights and computer off the auxiliary battery. During the driving time of the day, I could switch the battery into contact with the alternator in order to recharge it.

In the Nissan I constructed cupboards in the back to store food and dishes. I built a rack across the bed of the Nissan for a mattress which I had especially made to match the width of the bed. I could thus squeeze crosswise in the covered bed of the Nissan when caught in rains or caught at a border. This was always an option I liked when traveling through Africa. I liked sleeping in a tent. However, when thunderstorms loom, I would just as well be inside something that had a hard shell. And then there are those times when you do not have the time or desire to set up a tent. You can just pull up to a border post, jump in the back, and hit the sack. On the trip of 97, I did a lot of sleeping in the back of the Nissan.

I remember one time when Martha and I were camping at the Victoria Falls campsite in Zimbabwe. Around 12:00 midnight I was awakened by the rushing of the wind through the tops of the trees. I stuck my head out of the tent and caught a glimpse of some ferocious lightning in the distance that indicated something big was about to happen. I awakened Martha and told her to throw everything in the vehicle as fast as possible, it was about to gush forth from the heavens. We yanked up tent stakes and threw tent and blankets and everything inside. During all this mad rush, the drops of water kept increasing from the heavens. We jumped in after the last particle of camping gear had been thrown in. We shut the door of the Ark and the rains came. The floodgates of heaven broke off the hinges and we wished for morning.

There were about three hundred other campers at the campsite who did not have the same privilege as we had of climbing into a protective cocoon. The next morning was a sight to experience as unfortunate campers scuttled here and there in drenched clothes and tents, wading through mud and trash in order to put things back together. I was thankful for keeping my commitment to always travel Africa in a vehicle in which I could sleep.

When traveling Africa one must always take into consideration the rainy season. Tropical rains are not drizzly days of overcast clouds. When a tropical thunderstorm unleashes her fury, all earthly inhabitants are at her mercy. During the rainy season it will in some places rain day after day until mother earth becomes a sea of water. If you desire any comfort and protection from such an environment, think ahead and travel during the dry season if possible.

There were numerous other odds and ends and inventions I made for the Nissan to make it the ideal overland home for months of excursion across Africa on the '97 trip. I used oversized tires, jacked up the chassis for greater ground clearance, and attached a bulbar with high life jack. One must take extra spares as filters, tow cable, extra fuel tanks, water tanks, tools and so on. The only thing I did not take but wished I had for peace of mind, was a second spare tire. I believe one should travel with two spares throughout Africa. But mechanically

speaking, everything went well throughout the entire trip, except for a few hiccups with the Nissan on the return. More about this later.

## **Chapter 6**

### **AVIATION MISSIONS**

#### **(Interlude)**

In the early 1990s I had the privilege of taking to the air in order to make these journeys. Aviation missions was a great experience, one that few people have the privilege of enjoying. But before the 1997 trip I sold the Mooney 201. I was grounded. With the use of the airplane I was able to accomplish a great deal of work. In the book, *African Missionary Pilot*, I once wrote the following:

So you are wondering why we flew around in an airplane as evangelists? I know. You think we were just flying around having a good ole time. You're right. We were having a good time doing that which we sincerely loved doing: teaching and preaching the word of God. And we did like a little flying here and there. Admittedly, with most mission works aviation is not practical. But in what God wanted us to do in teaching seminars, it was a very practical and economical tool.

In the early '80s we were one of the few aviation mission operations in the world. However, there may have been some brother out there who was operating an airplane for the Lord which we did not know. He may not have wanted anyone to know for fear of being accused of "flying for fun." There are those who are so naive in their understanding of the real world in mission areas that they cannot understand the use of computers, boats, airplanes and cars in missions in order to get God's word everywhere it should go. But trust me, if you were where we were and doing what we were doing, I think you would rethink some of your positions on this.

I once made a special visit to a religious group called African Inland Missions. Their operation that I visited was in Nairobi, Kenya. Was I ever surprised to find a tremendous fleet of airplanes they were using to accomplish their work. They were operating about fifteen airplanes out

of Nairobi alone. They were hauling people and materials everywhere in the central regions of the continent. Other religious groups who are using airplanes include Mission Aviation Fellowship, Wings of Love, and Mercy Flights. I would estimate that the combined fleet of airplanes used in Africa by different religious groups is well over one hundred.

Now think for a moment. From Mutare to Cape Town it is a hard three-day journey of about thirty hours of driving. This would include two nights somewhere. When Martha and I once left Mutare, we departed at 7:00<sup>AM</sup> for Buffalo Range for customs and immigrations out of Zimbabwe. We landed at Musina, South Africa for a few minutes for customs and immigrations into South Africa. We then made a straight shot for Cape Town. Our total flying time was a little over eight hours for the day. At 5:45<sup>PM</sup> we settled into Fisantekraal where Cindy and Lisa were eagerly awaiting our arrival. That sure beat three days of travel on the road.

You can count up the time saved. If you were counting, that would be four working days in a two-way trip that we saved by flying. Be sure to add the wear and torture on our bodies on African roads. Add the nights we would have had to stay somewhere between days. Multiply that times dollars and cents and it will give you a good idea why we had the airplane in those days. Multiply that times the amount of time we saved over a year in travel and you almost have the salary of another preacher in some part of Africa.

### **A Day at the Airport**

“I want to fly in the airplane,” Lisa, our youngest daughter once complained. She had not flown with me for over five years, and thus after I brought the Mooney back from the States, she wanted me to take her for a ride. So one day we went to the airport. After parking the car, we strolled past one hangar after another. She patiently listened to my unending and enthusiastic jabber about flying. While walking around the south end of the main airport hangar, there was this crash, bang, skid, crunch, crunch, crunch. We suddenly lifted our heads and were startled to see this airplane skidding along the ground in a heap of dust with metal flying everywhere. The propeller was clanking on the concrete runway

and bending in several directions.

After all dislocated parts of the airplane finally settled to the ground, and before the dust cleared, four traumatized people threw back the canopy of what was once a fine flying machine and bailed out. All safe. A pilot, whose ego had just suffered a greater calamity, began to explain in a high pitched voice what he must have done wrong. It all boiled down to an overloaded plane taking off too quickly on a very hot day. When he was about twenty feet in the air, he stalled and slammed the airplane back onto the runway, smashing off all three landing gears (wheels), one wing and totally destroying the prop, which meant a complete overhaul on the engine. This was after the plane had been put back into service only two weeks before. The same pilot had done the same stunt with the same plane two years before. This was his third airplane accident as a result of stalling. Some guys never learn. I had a camera in hand, and as any good reporter, clicked off a few “after the fact” shots. (I later discovered that I had no film in the camera. Not such a good reporter after all.)

“You still want to fly today,” I asked Lisa. “Well, yes,” she somewhat replied. So the runway was cleared and we were off. It was a rough day. Because of her sensitive inner ear, she became somewhat air sick after about fifteen minutes. I threw her a barf bag just in case and headed for the airport. We parked the plane, planted ourselves in the car, and made our way home. I asked Lisa, “Had enough?” “Had too much for one day,” she sighed. So went one day at the local airport. I think that was the last flying experience Lisa had with me. She never complained about flying again.

## Chapter 7

### STEPS INTO AN ADVENTURE

The middle of April 1997 finally came around and it was time to make my way north up Africa out of Cape Town. Before I started my driving odyssey, I had to make an eighteen-hour initiation bus trip to Johannesburg, South Africa to attend and give lectures at the annual International African Lectureship. The 1997 lectureship was hosted by the Downtown church in Johannesburg and was directed by South Af-

rican evangelist George Funk. George and his wife, Rea, did a marvelous job in making this lectureship a great experience for everyone who attended. Over 3,500 members of the Lord's body attended, making this the largest attended lectureship ever in South Africa.

After the wonderful experience of the lectureship, it was back on the bus and another eighteen hours to Cape Town in order to leave for the north. I decided then that I did not like traveling in buses in Africa. Traveling in such was difficult in Brazil, but it was more challenging in Africa. I cannot sleep in a vertical position, and thus, that was my first and last trip on a bus in Africa.

Spiritual preparation for a major mission journey includes fasting and prayer. When one considers the thousands of people who will be contacted and influenced by your presence and teaching, then it is with great sobriety one launches out on such journeys. God is the maker of great epics upon which His servants must set their course to preach and teach. It is He who works in our lives to will and work for His good pleasure in order to carry out His work. Therefore, it is before Him that we must take our plans and pleas with fasting and prayer.

African lectureships really help one discover the general trend of the church. It is easy to find a cross section of the church as it struggles to grow out of all sorts of teachings and traditions that continually must be checked by the word of God. Lectureships are a way to easily see some of the problems that begin to develop and some of the trends facing the church. For this reason, it is necessary that churches have conferences, lectureships, workshops, seminars or whatever we might call them, in order to help the leaders to develop fellowship that is based on the word of God.

The lectureship in Johannesburg reminded me again of how much teaching needed to be done in Africa on some fundamental subjects. Africans are generally very traditional in their behavior in society. This traditionalism greatly influences their approach to Christian behavior. Their traditionalism often manifests itself in producing a legalistic approach to theology and Christian behavior.

When conducting seminars throughout the continent, I have always tried to be very cautious about giving advice on certain issues and

points of interpretation. More than often, the advice or personal interpretation is accepted as law, and thus, a church law is unintentionally established when only an opinion was expressed. Those who come to Africa to do seminars and meetings need to be very cautious in this area. Too often, imported issues have been imparted by some brethren from America who have presented their opinions in a very forceful manner, and consequently, churches have been divided over non-fundamental issues.

In Africa, legalism is sometimes a sincere effort on the part of some to maintain tradition. It is not simply doing what the Bible says to do, but obeying all that is mentioned in the Bible in any way. For example, Acts 8 states that both Philip and the eunuch went down into the water in order that Philip baptize the eunuch. Some brethren contend, therefore, that the one who is doing the baptizing must personally go down into the water with the one who is to be baptized. Since the Bible says it, therefore, this is the way some brethren say it must be done. So much for portable baptisteries and baptisms in bathtubs. Of course, Philip's going down into the water with the eunuch was only incidental in order to conduct the baptism. And incidentals are not binding. But when one has a shallow understanding of the Bible, but wants to please God in a legalistic way, sometimes incidentals creep in as doctrine.

Principles of biblical interpretation are vital subjects to be taught in Africa. Couple this with the teaching of Romans and Galatians in order to combat the spirit of legalism that seems to beset many Christians in Africa. I believe that these two areas of study must be taught throughout the world. Because many have come out of so much religious confusion in reference to understanding the Bible, we must take another look at how we understand the Bible and how we apply that which we understand.

There is the need in Africa for a great deal of practical teaching on the fundamental principles of biblical interpretation. Efforts must be made to encourage brethren to interpret the Bible in a manner that will promote love and unity, and not division. This was one of my principle subjects to study in seminars on the trip of '97. I wanted to spread a

teaching of unity that would promote the answer to Jesus' prayer that we all be one (Jn 17:20,21). Most brethren want to be united, but few understand how to maintain unity without legalistically cloning others to conform to one's opinions and traditions. I have found that some brethren do not understand that unity can be realized only when we learn how to set one another free from our own personal traditions and opinions.

Throughout the trip of '97 I discovered an important thing that hindered people from doing what they would like to do. This was the problem of fear. We are afraid of bandits. We are afraid of break-downs. We are afraid of the unknown. We are just afraid. I have had my times of fear and apprehension. However, I now have a better understanding of how the Holy Spirit wrote on this matter in order to encourage all who would overcome fear with the power of God. Paul wrote to Timothy, "*For God has not given us a spirit of fear, but of power and of love and of a sound mind*" (2 Tm 1:7). John wrote, "*There is no fear in love; but perfect love casts out fear, because fear involves torment. But he who fears has not been made perfect in love*" (1 Jn 4:18). These are good thoughts upon which to meditate. The reason I place these thoughts here is because I believe we allow our lives to be governed by fear to the point that many do not do those things they would like because of fear. Some do not do what they should because of fear.

A life that is controlled by fear is a stymied life for the Lord. Paul nurtured the new converts in Iconium, Lystra, Derbe and Antioch with the words, "*Through many tribulations we will enter the kingdom of heaven*" (At 14:22). Evangelistic work in foreign environments is not a bed of roses. There are some great evangelists in the world today who have put their lives on the line because of a tremendous amount of courage. I believe these evangelists should be highly commended for their daring sacrifices. The church in Jerusalem gave credit to Paul and Barnabas for their sacrificial spirit to hazard their lives for the Lord. The Holy Spirit had inscribed in inspired words for all history the account of these men who had "*risksed their lives for the name of our Lord Jesus Christ*" (At 15:26). It is true that a belief that is not worth

dying for is certainly not worth living for.

Martha has always said that I do not fear. Well, I would challenge that conclusion. I have put myself in some fearful situations. On my trips through Africa, I have encountered many brave men, men who would willingly give their lives for their belief in the gospel. And on the '97 trip, I heard many stories where faithful African disciples had given their lives for Jesus. Hearing these stories reminded me that we must take risks for Jesus. It was encouraging to be with and hear of the heroic stories of brethren who faced death for Jesus.

“Launching out into the deep” is a personality characteristic that is based upon faith. Perfect love and the Spirit of God develop this characteristic in the heart of those who give themselves over to serve God. Those evangelists who have never done any launching have yet to overcome fear enough to get on with God’s work. World evangelism calls for those who have the guts, grit and gall to get the job done. I pray that in some way in the pages to come to give honor to those men and women in Africa who have done a magnificent job in sacrificing for the name of Jesus. Missionaries usually do not receive enough honor for their work.

## **Chapter 8**

### **THE CALL OF THE WILD**

I had shut down my air cruising and grounded myself to land cruising when I sold our airplane in 1997. I have never flown another private airplane unto the day of this writing. At the time I sold the airplane, I was getting heavily involved in other things, and thus, could not be obsessed with flying. Only obsessed pilots are safe pilots, and since the work of Africa International Mission was growing, I had no time to keep up with an airplane.

Once I sold the plane before the trip of 1997, I was ready to do some serious cross-country travel. So on the morning of my departure for the '97 trip, I first awoke at 3:00<sup>AM</sup>. I awoke again at 4:00<sup>AM</sup>. At 5:00<sup>AM</sup> I said, let’s get on with it. So I was off about 6:00<sup>AM</sup> for Ethiopia where I would eventually arrive about two months after my depar-

ture from Cape Town. Somehow, at the time of my departure Ethiopia looked a long way away on the map. Nevertheless, journeys must have a beginning, and that was what I was doing on that beautiful Cape Thursday morning when I headed for Ethiopia. There would be a lot of seminars and meetings between Cape Town and Ethiopia and back. So I was anxious to get going in order to bring into reality one year of planning and dreaming.

Brothers in Cape Town came to pray me off. Sometimes the big heart of brethren is all you need to get that little dose of confidence to make the next step of the way. The love and prayers of these brethren were measured by the time they had to get up and drive across town just to see me off.

Twelve hours after departure, I was sitting on a cow path between a pasture fence and a corn field in the farm lands of northern South Africa. This was my first campsite and I christened it Cow Bush Camp. As the sun slipped over the western horizon, the peace of the place began to relax away a day of traveling fatigue. Being a farm boy, it could not have been a more tranquil location. There were a million stars in the sky and at least that many mosquitoes licking their chops for the fresh meat that had just arrived.

Around five in the morning, I could hear the shuffle of hooves outside my tent. Then there was this strange sound I could not immediately identify. My heart sparked into life as I thought and wondered at the strange sound. It sounded like some exotic snake with laryngitis. I heard the moos of cows. There was the unending shuffling of their hoofs. And then that snake sound again. I did not want to stick my head outside the tent, so I laid there and contemplated the vicious creature that was lurking just outside that was ready to pounce on me and have me for morning breakfast.

And then it hit me. I had heard that sound before. It was back on the farm in Kansas. I relaxed, smiled to myself, and laid back on my foam mattress for prayer time. If you have never heard a cow relieve herself when nature calls, you will not understand the sound. I then realized that I had been in the city too long. I had forgotten too many sounds of nature.

When I eventually emerged from the shelter of my tent that was pitched about ten feet from the pasture fence, I discovered that I had become the morning spectacle of about fifty cows. They just stood there. Staring. Wondering. Relieving themselves. Was this their signal that I was to move on? Or, was this their marking me in a way of acceptance? Africa sometimes sends confusing signals.

But then this was an African morning. There is something spectacular about African mornings in the bush. I would agree with V. M. Carnegie, who wrote at the turn of the last century in his book, *A Kenya Farm Dairy*, the following statement of his camping experiences in the African morning.

They were delicious, those mornings, once the agony of dressing in the icy dark was past. There is a freshness about dawn in Africa that is very invigorating. Everything is clear and sparkling and joyous; the fragrant, downy, white leaves of Leleshwa shrubs shining against a deep blue sky. Our oxen swish slowly through the dew-laden grass, their supple hides glossy in the sunlight. Cries and laughter from the camp, the clinking of trek-chains, and pleasant pungence of wood smoke combine to put new life to one's soul.

By now you should have perceived that I was struck by the African mystique. I suppose my intrigue with bush and animals are the preserved seeds of nature that were embedded in my soul as a Kansas farm boy. Africa appeals to my inner instincts with which I can submerge myself in the wonders of God's glorious creation. The bush presents an environment from which one can truly detach from the hyper activity of the modern urban world. It is an opportunity to relish one's primal roots by reconnecting with the real world outside the city. If you are a born and bred city boy, you will not understand this. In fact, I would venture to say that the bush would somewhat scare you.

In the middle of the '90s when we were focusing our attention on planting the church in northern Namibia in and around the city of Oshakati, we would go outside the city several miles and camp in the bush. Since there

was no campsite in Oshakati, we made our own beside some farmer's kraal in the country. On some of these trips, we would take one or two of the brethren in Cape Town. I remember on one occasion Jim Hyde and I took along one of the Cape Town preachers who had never before camped in the bush. On the first night, when Jim and I were relishing the serenity of the African night in the bush, our fellow preacher had some problems. At about 2:00<sup>AM</sup> he arose out of his tent, having difficulty with his breathing. I asked if he had any chest pains. None. How about the left arm. No problem. My bush doctor sense told me that he was not having a heart attack. When this same difficulty in breathing happened the second night we were in the bush, I concluded that he was having panic attacks. Now imagine always living in the security of close neighbors in a city. Take that all away, and one's mind has some difficulties. A tremendous insecurity sets in, and the body goes into a nervous panic attack. The bush is not for everyone. This was not the only case where I have heard of panic attacks by first-timers to the bush.

Regardless of man's lack of attention or concern for his own environment, it is exhilarating to experience the cycle of life that has gone on for centuries in Africa. To engulf oneself in the aurora of African animal life is an experience with which memories are made. J. J. Lipscomb explained it best several years ago in his book, *We Built a Country*.

... if you act in proper manner, you reap your reward because you will see the elephants talking together as they drowse away the heat of the day under the cool shade of the trees along the river banks; you can watch the lion cubs playing hide and seek among grass tussocks in the sinking rays of the westering sun while their mothers stretch, and stand up, and sniff the evening air, and the black-maned lions lift their heavy heads and yawn.

And, while you wait and watch, the tall and elegant giraffes will approach almost within touching distance while they nibble the young leaves from the flat tops of thorn trees and look around them with soft and wondering eyes.

The bush is alive in the early morning, around dawn and sunrise, be-

fore the comfortable heat of the day drives all living things—including man when man is in the bush—to laze and browse in the shade, and it is alive also in the cool of the evening when those who live by grazing come out into the open to graze, and those who live by hunting come out to hunt. But the animals which may be hunted do not live in terror of the hunters; it is only the individual which is hunted that is terrified and his terror is only momentarily communicated to those around them. Just for a moment terror is there; in a few moments terror has done; and a lion will walk through a herd of game which will be no more than wary of him and do no more than give him his distance. Nature, by allowing only the fittest to survive, makes wariness and alertness an integral part of her creature, but fear is not a persistent part of them; it comes and is gone again, and that is all. That is why man can find beauty and peace among the denizens of the bush, and in the bush itself, and a satisfaction that is beyond the comprehension of those who only dwell in cities.

Every Westerner who thinks about Africa, thinks of great white hunters who roamed the velt (plains) in search of prize trophies for pride and profit. Such is actually something of the past. Nevertheless, if you have the money, you can still go on that safari on a privately owned game farm that has preserved and produced African wildlife by selling hunting rights to those who want to experience the adventure of the African big game hunt. If this is your fantasy, then there are those opportunities for you if you search the Internet. One of the most famous elephant hunters of African history was Karamojo Bell, who it is said, killed more than 1,500 elephants in his day of the ivory trade in the 19<sup>th</sup> century. In his book, *The Wanderings of an Elephant Hunter*, Bell wrote of one of his elephant hunts.

Elephant! *Atome!* [in the Karamojo language]. Word the first to be learned and the last to be forgotten of any native language. A kind of excitement seizes us all; more most of all, the Karamojans least. Now the boys are told to stay behind and to make no noise. They are at liberty to climb trees if they like. I look to my .303 [British Enfield rifle], but, of course, it had been ready for hours. Noting that the wind—what there was of it—

was favourable, the natives and I go forward, and soon we come upon the broken trees, mimosa and white thorn, the chewed fibrous balls of saxivera, the moist patches with froth still on them, the still steaming and unoxidised spoor, and the huge tracks with the heavily imprinted clear-cut corrugations of a very recently passing bunch of bull elephants. In numbers they were five as nearly as I could estimate. Tracking them was child's play, and I expected to see them at any moment. It was, however, much longer than I anticipated before we sighted their dull gray hides. For they were travelling as well as feeding. It is remarkable how much territory elephant cover when thus feeding along. At first sight they seem to be so leisurely, and it is not until one begins to keep in touch with them that their speed is realized. Although they appear to take so few steps, each step of their lowest gait is about 6 ft....

I was now almost light-headed with excitement, and several times on the very verge of firing a stupid and hasty shot from my jumping and flickering rifle. So shaky was it when I once or twice put it to my shoulder that even in my then state of mind I saw that no good could come of it. After a minute or two, during which I was returning to a more normal state, the animal with the largest tusks left the line slightly, and slowly settled into a halt beside a mimosa bush. I got a clear glimpse at his broadside at which looked about twenty yards, but was really forty yards, and I fired for his heart. With a flinch, a squirm and a roar he was soon in rapid motion straight away, with his companions in full flight ahead of him. I was rather surprised at this headlong flight after one shot as I had expected the elephant here to be more unsophisticated, but hastily concluding that the Swahili traders must have been pumping lead into them more often than one imagined, I legged it for the cloud of dust where the fleeting animals had disappeared. Being clad in running shorts and light shoes, it was not long before I almost ran slap up against a huge and motionless grey stern. Recoiling very rapidly indeed from this awe-inspiring sight, I saw on one side of it an enormous head and tusk which appeared to stick out at rightangles. So drooping were the trunk and ears and so motionless the whole appearance of what had been a few seconds ago the very essence of power and activity that it was borne straight to even my inexperienced mind that here was death. And so it was, for as I

stared goggle-eyed that mighty body began to sway from side to side more and more, until with a crash it fell sideways, bearing earthwards with it a fair sized tree. Straight past it I saw another elephant, turned almost broadside, at about out 100 yards distance, evidently listening and obviously on the point of flight. Running a little forward so as to get a clear sight of the second beast, I sat quickly down and fired carefully at the shoulder, when much the same performance took place as in the first case, except that No. 2 came down to a slow walk after a burst of speed instead of to a standstill as with No. 1.

Ranging rapidly alongside I quickly put him out of misery and tore after the others which were, of course, by this time, thoroughly alarmed and in full flight. After a mile or two of fast going I found myself pretty well done, so I sat down and rolled myself a cigarette of the strong black shag so commonly smoked by the Swahilis. Presently my native guides came with every appearance of satisfaction on their now beaming faces.

After a few minutes' rest we retracked the elephant back to where our two lay dead. The tusks of the first one we examined were not long but very thick, and the other had one side a tusk broken some 2 feet outside the lip, while on the other was the magnificent tusk which had filled me with wonder earlier on. It was almost faultless and beautifully curved. What a shame that its companion was broken!

As we were cutting the tail off, which is always done to show anyone finding the carcass that it has been killed and claimed, my good fellows came up with the gear and the interpreter. Everyone, including myself, was in high good humour, and when the Karamojans said that their village was not far off we were more pleased than ever, especially at the sun was sinking rapidly. After what appeared to the natives no doubt as a short distance, but what seemed to my sore feet and tired legs a very long one, we saw the welcome first of a camp. A kettle was soon on the fire for tea, while some strips of sun-cured haartebeeste biltong writhed and sizzled on the embers. Meanwhile my boys got the bed ready by first of all cutting the grass and smoothing down the knobs of the ground while another spread grass on it to form a mattress. Over this the canvas sheet and blankets and with a bag of cartridges wrapped in a coat for a pillow the bed was complete. Then two forked sticks stuck in the ground close

alongside the bed to hold the rifle and all was ready for the night.

After a hearty supper of toasted biltong and native flour porridge, washed down with tea, I cleaned my rifle, loaded it and lay down utterly tired out and soon dropped off to the music of hyenas' howling.

The Africa of Bell is gone. It is a good thing that it is gone for there would be no more elephants today. Thanks to some good management by local governments, the animals of Africa will be preserved for future generations in national parks. So the experiences of the Great White Hunters as Bell are a thing of the distant past simply because the Africa that then was is no more.

## **Chapter 9**

### **BACK IN THE AIR TO ZAMBIA**

Once one passes the border post into Botswana from South Africa, the pace of life slows down to where snails can keep up with you. People drive slower. They walk slower. They think slower as they meander across the roads. I think the horde of donkeys of the country even go slower. It is a pace of life that is actually more sensible than the scurry of many places in urban South Africa.

I remember one of my initial experiences into Botswana in the early '90s. It was a flight I made over the country on my way to Zambia which I wrote in *African Missionary Pilot*.

Coming forth from the depths of committed love shines forth the signals which manifest the love of truth and righteousness. To be in the midst of those who make such proclamations with life examples is a most humbling experience. I had that experience on a seminar trip to Zambia.

The silhouette of the sun had not yet made its appearance in the eastern horizon when the first cylinders of Yankee Charlie sparked to life at the Fisantekraal Airport. It was 400 miles to Upington, South Africa where I cleared immigration out of South Africa. From Upington I had my first experience with the Kalahari Desert and its 600 mile stretch of nothing from Upington to Maun, Botswana. Sand, rock and desert bush

cluttered the terrain. (I yearned for the waters of the blue Caribbean Sea of yesteryear.)

Maun is nestled in the middle of the most sparsely populated nation of the world, Botswana. In those days, it was a settlement of scattered houses, huts and hotels which offered little comfort. As a gateway to the Okavango swamps, those going there were on their way to somewhere else. Thankfully, so was I.

One night in an overrated hotel was sufficient. The next morning I was up and to the airport. Again, I slithered between boxes of literature into the cockpit of Yankee Charlie to make my way up a tributary of the Okavango River. I flew low. About 400 feet. I had great expectations of seeing some great wildlife in this area. However, other than a few rhino, I saw donkey after donkey. Small farmer villages cluttered the banks of this particular tributary, as humanity began to overcrowd the region. All of these farmers must have been donkey farmers. There were donkeys everywhere.

After about fifteen minutes of donkey viewing, I headed up to 7,500 feet for the 220 mile leg to Victoria Falls, Zimbabwe. Drought had stricken this land. Across the Chobe Reserve I could see absolutely nothing. Water holes were dry. I wondered concerning the miserable state of life below. The relentless drought of this year had unmercifully ravaged the southern part of Africa.

Missionaries Don and Rita Boyd had come across from Kalomo, Zambia to fetch me at the Victoria Falls Airport in Zimbabwe. They had been in Zambia for about two and a half years and were making plans to change the location of their ministry. They are a great couple, he being a retired flight engineer from the Air Force. They would be returning with me to Cape Town after the seminar, for they were considering a move to Cape Town. I was trying to coax them into working with us in Cape Town. The Boyds are folks we fell in love with from our very first meeting. They have been great workers for the Lord. At the time of this writing, and in their '60s, they are working in northwestern Zambia.

From the airport it was about an hour drive to the house of missionaries Lloyd and Pearl Henson. At the time, the Hensons were working a farm in Zambia. From this farm they had been training evangelists since

1976 when they established the Zambia Bible Training Center. The Hensons had been in Zambia since 1969. Brother Henson was seventy-two years young at the time of my arrival and in good health. Such faithful laborers in the kingdom will certainly receive their reward.

After a great night in the loving hospitality of the Hensons, we were off on an hour and a half journey to the Namwianga Mission outside Kalomo where I would conduct a Bible seminar.

Mission work in the Livingstone-Kalomo area originated in 1912 with the coming of an African brother named Peter Masiya. Brother Masiya was from Mozambique and came to the area after having been taught by brother John Sherriff in Bulawayo, Zimbabwe (old Rhodesia). In March 1923 brother and sister W. N. Short arrived in the area north of Livingstone and cleared the grass for what would be called Sinde Mission. Though it started only as a farm in the beginning, this work later developed to include a school to educate local children. Numerous missionaries arrived in the southwest region of Zambia in the years to follow. In 1927 the George Scotts arrived. They were followed by the Shorts, Lawyers and Merritts. Schools were started at Kalomo and Kabanga. At the time I was there, there were about five school locations that operated under the name of Namwianga Christian Schools.

My purpose for coming again to this area, and specifically to Namwianga, was to conduct a second preacher and church leader seminar for churches in the southwestern part of Zambia. The Namwianga church sponsored the program, providing food and housing for all who could come. We had conducted a pilot seminar there a year before. This was a follow-up effort because of the desires of the local leaders.

The year before we had about twenty-five preachers in attendance. For this seminar no transportation was provided so the expectations were for an attendance of about thirty-five. Those who could come would have to make it to the seminar on their own.

The dedication of committed African men of God is a marvellous thing to experience. On Monday I began lectures at 8:00<sup>AM</sup>. Forty preachers and church leaders were present. This group represented about sixty churches, since many of the men preached for more than one group. We asked who had come from the greatest distance. Three or four of the men had

walked from forty to fifty miles to be there. This is a ten to twelve hour walk for an African. Their commitment was most humbling.

On Tuesday morning I began the day with a devotional lesson at 7:00<sup>AM</sup>. Except for lunch, supper and breaks, we carried on to 8:30<sup>PM</sup>. This was the schedule for the rest of the week. Men who are hungering and thirsting after truth and righteousness desire the sincere milk of the word. Such desires can work a speaker hard.

On Tuesday afternoon more preachers arrived. Four or five men arrived that afternoon. I asked these men from where they had come and how far they walked. They had journeyed from beyond the Kabanga Mission to the southwest. They had walked about 120 kilometers (75 miles). They had been walking for two days. It is a very humbling experience to stand before such dedication. By Wednesday over sixty were in attendance, representing over seventy churches. The church in Africa is growing because of the tremendous dedication and sacrifices of the church leaders as these.

The Namwianga brethren provided the hospitality, though twice as many came than was first expected. Except for my coming, these brethren made all arrangements and carried all costs. It was and is a great group of Christians who continue to set an example for others.

Somehow, the 1,200 mile trip the Boyds and I made back to Cape Town seemed insignificant in comparison to the journeys some of these leaders had to make in returning to their homes. To many of them it was another twenty, fifty or seventy-five mile walk. They walked. I flew.

There is a distance between cultures here which I encountered for a few brief days in the middle of Africa. I often wonder at God's working to bring together all things and everyone it takes to make experiences like this happen. His infinite workings and the dedicated submission of preachers in rags humbles us to continue without complaint. As I contemplate standing in judgment beside men as those in Zambia, I am ashamed of my foolish complaints. Would that we continually remind ourselves of a Savior who suffered for us by making a similar incredible journey from the comforts of heaven to the cruelty of a cross.

## **Chapter 10**

### **BACK ON THE ROAD**

The church in Gaborone, the capital of Botswana, was started in the early 1970s. It was started by Patrick Selemela who was first a student of the Manzini Bible School in Swaziland, but later transferred to the Natal School of Preaching in Pietermaritzburg, South Africa. In 1997 there was only one church in Gaborone and twenty-six in the entire country of about 1.4 million people.

Dennis Malepa was doing a faithful work in Gaborone when I visited in April 1997. I had earlier met this brother a year before when the Gaborone church had hosted the African Lectureship. He had at that time chosen the theme for the lectureship. The theme was on Galatians and legalism, which I thought was very perceptive on his part in recognizing this needed subject of discussion among African churches.

This is a subject that must always be studied in the context of both newly established churches, and those churches that have fallen into the trap of legalistic traditionalism. Paul and Barnabas established the churches of Galatia on the first missionary journey in Acts 13,14. This was around A.D. 46 and 47. If he wrote the letter to the Galatians in 48 or 49, then this letter was on a subject that was written to new converts. The subject, therefore, must be taught to new Christians in order to guard them against developing a system of legalistic religion. This is one of those subjects in our mission studies that we often fail to teach new evangelists.

The church in the country of Botswana was actually started in the early fifties somewhere in the northern part of the country. I was told that a church was started around 1959 in Francistown by Rich Macubu. A team of American missionaries settled in the region of Shakawe in the northwest in 1985. As a result of the work of these missionaries, twelve churches developed in the northwest and were in existence in 1997.

### **Heading Due East**

Leaving Gaborone for Johannesburg, South Africa was to be a

simple navigational process across northwestern South Africa. But because of my unfamiliarity with the area at the time, I was able to turn a four hour trip into six hours before driving across Johannesburg and into the yard of George Funk in the night hours. Finding one's way around the Johannesburg metropolitan area has always been a challenge to me.

George was doing a good work with World Bible School in the eastern part of South Africa. He is one of those workers who has used the WBS outreach to its maximum in evangelism. His center of work at that time was the Downtown church in Johannesburg. The outreach of his efforts have extended throughout eastern South Africa and continue to expand into other areas. The Funks were truly faithful laborers who were worthy of their hire.

At the time, one of the ideas George was contemplating that I thought was interesting was buying a large truck for evangelism. He wanted a truck that would haul around a tent that could seat over two hundred people. The truck would also be the sleeping quarters for the evangelistic team who would drive it to where local churches could use it for campaigns. It would also contain a baptistery. He would haul literature in the truck and offer it as a tool for local brethren throughout southern Africa. Only George could dream such dreams. As a result of his dreams, he not only put the first truck into operation, but bought another through the contributions of American brethren to operate in central Africa. These trucks have been a tremendous evangelistic tool for local African churches to conduct local gospel meetings and campaigns.

Before I take you again into Swaziland, there is a mountain country in southern Africa that has always intrigued me. It is the country of Lesotho. I visited this country in the early '90s on a flight with Yankee Charlie out of Cape Town.

### **Discovering Lesotho**

Traveling to different places in Africa is a great learning experience. Lesotho was one of those exciting places in the mountains to which one could find a relaxing reunion with brethren in Christ in the setting of a beautiful country.

I had never been to Lesotho before February 1992. This small country

is encompassed within the borders of South Africa. In the years of the 19<sup>th</sup> century, South Africans beat the Lesotho people back into the Drakensburg Mountains. They stopped the onslaught of terror against the people only when the king of the Lesotho people made a trip to England and laid his plight before the Queen of England. She commissioned a mountainous land to this tribe which is relatively desolate of adequate farmland. Nevertheless, here is a people that has endured the years. They have survived and developed a loving nature about them which is above any that I have experienced in Africa.

My anticipation awoke me at 3:30<sup>AM</sup> on one calm Saturday morning when I set out for Lesotho in Yankee Charlie. Through the invitation of the Maseru church, I was on my way to the airport in the dark for my first visit to the illustrious mountain country. After stirring awake Yankee Charlie, I was off Fisantekraal Airport into the dark and over the Hottentot's Holland Mountains. This was my first thrill of flying the African night. Not much different from nights anywhere else in the world. Same moon but different stars. The Southern Cross is always there to guide one's way. The only difference is that you are out there over Africa. I suppose there is something romantic about it. At least, I confess it was romantic to me back in those years.

After three and a half hours I touched down in Bloemfontein, South Africa for customs and immigration out of South Africa. It was only a thirty-five minute hop from there over to Maseru, with its mile-high airport named Moshoeshoe. (No, you do not pronounce it as it looks.)

I grew up in the state of Kansas. At the time I visited Lesotho there were approximately one hundred churches in the state of Kansas. The population of Kansas was about 2.5 million. I remember people saying that the State is relatively unevangelized. It was. The small churches of the state were sparsely sprinkled across the farmlands with great distances in between.

Now here was Lesotho. A country of 2.5 million. Maseru was the largest city with 100,000. The population was basically a rural people with small villages here and there throughout the mountainous countryside. But amongst these 2.5 million there were only a little over one hundred and fifty Christians. That is what I call unevangelized.

There were about 125 members in the Maseru church. Attendance was around 175. This church had most of the membership of the entire nation. To my knowledge there were only four churches in the country when I arrived. I often wondered how we take for granted the fellowship of our fellow brothers and sisters in areas where the church is strong. And in comparing the size of the church in Kansas with the church in Lesotho, the church was strong in Kansas.

The Maseru church surprised me. It is not typical of Africans to show much affection in public. A simple handshake is usually all you get. But not so with the Lesotho people. You get a hug. After working among so many different cultural groups in the world which did not show such warm affection in public, I was delightfully surprised with the friendliness of these people. They made me feel like a long lost brother. Such made me think of the Brazilians who must be the “huggeness” group of people in the world.

After my arrival, Saturday afternoon was consumed with teaching for the church. The purpose of my visit was to edify and train the disciples in Maseru. Saturday’s session centered around how to share the gospel. Sunday’s lectures focused on the responsibility of local churches to financially support mission outreach.

Though the time that is spent with a church as this is often brief for such seminars, we must not underestimate the impact that results from the brief time of teaching. This is especially true in the area of literature. I had taken six boxes of books and materials on this particular trip. The church consumed the material as starved saints who had been stranded in a literary desert. This is where the long-lasting effects of such meetings is determined. During the meetings, ideas are shared that challenge thinking. Literature continues to nourish the saints for weeks to come. Such workshops give a quantum leap of spiritual growth to isolated churches who are out there struggling for survival and growth on their own.

About a year and a half after I conducted this meeting with this church, I encountered one of the members in Port Elizabeth. He said that after the workshop on sharing the gospel, the congregation had weekly meetings in order to perfect their presentation of the material that I had given them. During the next year they had over seventy-five baptisms by using the

simple teaching of sharing the death, burial and resurrection (the gospel) with their friends. It is amazing how the simple gospel, once known and shared from loving hearts, can have such a great impact.

When I was in Maseru I was impressed with the church. It was in the process of building its own building. It was supporting three preachers. The church was composed of a group of energetic young leaders who determined to go beyond holding their own. They were doing well.

I thoroughly enjoyed the blessings of Lesotho hospitality. The Saturday night's barbecue ended at 11:30<sup>PM</sup>. The comforts of staying with brethren and talking about the work of the church refreshed my confidence in brethren as these to maintain the faith in an often difficult environment of twisted religions.

All good things as this come to a close. As I lifted off Moshoeshoe International Airport and headed for home, a warm feeling came across my soul. All of us had made sweet memories. I knew I had been with brethren with whom I would spend eternity. Because of our brotherhood we bonded with one another in Spirit. We cherished the hopes that one day we would be in eternity never to be separated again.

As I made my way across the wilderness of central South Africa to the Cape, the sun lazily sat over the western horizon. There in the twilight of another African night, I enjoyed the satisfaction of having experienced the essence of Christianity that was sprinkled with African culture. The love and brotherhood that brings people of different cultures and languages together as one is an experience the divided world must see. At the time, I prayed for the dawn of a new South Africa that was beginning to show its light in the east as the elections of 1994 were drawing close. The time was quickly coming for a vision of oneness on a national scale. However, we the church had to show the world how Christian unity can be applied to the hearts of men. The church must lead the way. Instead of being sidetracked by the mistakes of culture, the church must dare to apply Divine truth to itself. It must be bold to preach that truth to the culture in which it thrives. Too often the church is molded by the culture in which it struggles. However, it must set the standard for brotherhood in humanity. Men must see in the church hope for unity amidst so much cultural diversity.

## **Chapter 11**

### **THE ENCHANTMENT OF SWAZILAND**

My first experience in Swaziland was in 1991. I flew there for a seminar with the Manzini Bible School. It is a school that has produced some great workers in Africa and continues today to have an effective work.

On the 1991 trip to Swaziland, I had just concluded a meeting in East London on Tuesday night. I was up early Wednesday morning, packed and on my way to the airport to fly to Swaziland to begin a meeting that night for the church in Manzini, with which missionary Dick van Dyke was working at the time.

I first experienced the Drakensburg Mountains on this clear Wednesday morning. I filed for 11,500 feet and pushed Yankee Charlie for twenty minutes to get her to altitude. Once I levelled off, it was a cloudless flight through the majestic Drakensburg Mountains. This historic range of mountains beautified the south central area of southern Africa. Most of the mountains are in the country of Lesotho, where dwell rugged mountain folks who have retained a past-century culture of friendliness and hospitality. I looked down on isolated mountain villages and wondered if the inhabitants had ever seen a stranger. “Who would struggle through such rugged territory to visit them? Would the locals ever leave their castles in the sky and venture down to ‘civilization’? Will anyone ever go there with the gospel?”

The mountains of the land were awesome and inspiring. As I flew over, by and around these monuments of geology, I must confess that I had the urge to lace on my hiking shoes and labor through the many trails in order to reach by land the peaks of the mountains. Back in those days, I was a hiker at heart. I had very strong legs that were left over from my farm days, and thus mountains were a challenge to keep my muscles in shape. However, too much office work has allowed my leg muscles to become quite normal.

After about three hours in flight, the landing gear of Yankee Charlie

eased into position and I made my approach into Matsapha Airport outside Manzini. I could tell that this country was also suffering from the El Nino generated drought that had plagued southern Africa in 1992. It was dry and the southern part of the continent was entering the dry season when there would definitely be no rain. It was going from dry to drier. Bulawayo, Zimbabwe was down to about two weeks of water for the city. Most of Zimbabwe was suffering severely. The drought extended up through Zambia and Malawi. It was one of those once-in-a-lifetime droughts that bring misery and suffering to millions. People were desperate for food. When there is great population growth on already overburdened land, drought sends thousands into eternity without having heard the gospel. Would that those blessed of this world could experience the desperation of the poor who are enduring a drought. Africa is cursed with drought. It seems that drought and famine are going on somewhere on the continent at all times. The problem with drought in areas where people are subsistence farmers is that there is no food when the crops die.

I always liked going to Swaziland. This small kingdom, with its young king, is a nation of friendly people and opportunity for evangelism. Grass covered mountains compose the western mountainous regions. Flatlands are throughout the east.

Mickey Figueiredo and Dick van Dyke have faithfully labored in this country for years. The Manzini Bible School continues to train men who come from up Africa. In 1992 there were from fifty-five to sixty churches in Swaziland.

One of the encouraging aspects of the church was its indigenous nature. In order for the church to grow in any area there must be a spirit of independence among the people. The local churches must feel that the responsibility of evangelism rests upon their shoulders. There is a definite feeling of independence among the Swaziland church leaders. It is a spirit that will certainly carry them on.

### **On The Road To Swaziland**

Swaziland is one of those few remaining kingdoms of the world that is ruled by a king. However, during 1996 and 1997, the monarch was under great pressure to allow democracy to take over the country.

A number of strikes had failed to produce any results, and thus, at the end of 1997, the king still reigned supreme throughout the land and there seemed to be no end of his reign.

Though I made several trips to the Manzini Bible School throughout the years, the particular trip of '97 was to be the last for some time because of its great distance from Cape Town. It was a twenty-three hour drive from Cape Town to Manzini via the use of car and road. Before I left on the '97 trip, I had sold our airplane which could change twenty-three hours into five hours. In the future, therefore, it would be difficult to stir up the energy to make such a trip. The 1997 trip, therefore, was in some sense a final visit.

The Manzini Bible School was started in 1965 with the purchase of a little over two hundred acres of land by Eldred Echols and Al Horne. The land was situated about two kilometers southwest of the Matsapha Airport. In early 1966, brothers Echols and Horne approached the Montgomery Boulevard church in Albuquerque, New Mexico about overseeing the work of a preacher training school on the grounds. The church accepted the challenge by repaying Echols and Horne the money they had initially given for a down payment on the land. The church then took up the payments and made plans to establish a school for the training of preachers. The first students enrolled in the school in 1967.

Several people were faithfully working with the school when I visited in April 1997. They included Samson Shandu of Swaziland who functioned as the director of the school. However, he retired from that work that year, and Kurt Platt, one of the instructors, became the new director. Wendy, Kurt's wife, was also working in teaching secretarial skills to the students. Kurt had been with the school for eight years, and as they launched into some new projects to support the school from African resources, he was a qualified leader for the work. Kurt and Wendy are two very special people for the Lord's kingdom in Africa.

Craig and Candy Stevens, with Brian and Sellinah Motsa, were also teaching at the school in April 1997. Manuel de Oliveira, the father of Candy Stevens, was completing a special three years of training of Mozambique students at the school, since Portuguese was his first

language. He was also helping with the school at the time of my '97 visit, but was moving on to a greater work with Portuguese Africa in the future.

The church in Swaziland continues at a steady pace, though actual growth has been minimal in the last few years. Nevertheless, the function of the school was actually taking on a new spirit of growth and activity. The largest student body of the school was in 1997 with a total enrollment of twenty-five students. Fifteen of these students had been recruited from the churches of Zambia. At that time, therefore, the focus of the school was in teaching students who had come from other countries of Africa than Swaziland.

One of the ambitious projects of the school that started in '97 was called the Tree of Life Project. In order to make the school more self-supporting, some South African brethren, in conjunction with the leadership of the school, decided to plant Macadamia trees on the approximately two hundred unused acres of school property.

Those working with the project planned to plant 17,000 trees and also set up a processing plant for the Macadamia nuts. In connection with what they would grow on the two hundred acres of school grounds, they would also sell trees to local farmers, and thus, profit from processing the nuts of their trees. It was an ambitious project and one for which everyone prayed.

At first we all thought that this was a nutty idea. But actually, it was a brilliant idea. Unfortunately, no one had thought of such thirty years ago when the land was purchased and the school begun. Joy Lea Brasell, the Montgomery church elder who was working with the project, simply stated, "We just did not have this vision back then." The point is that we must come up with new ideas for helping mission projects to become self-supporting. There are too many similar situations today as the Manzini school where churches have had no vision of aiding mission efforts to become self-supporting.

There were thirty-six churches in Swaziland in 1997. New churches had not been started for some time. There was an estimated 350 to 400 members of the church in this nation of a little over 600,000 in population.

## Chapter 12

### LONDON IN AFRICA

You can look on a map and find East London on the south coast of South Africa. This is a quaint city in South Africa that is unique. I was there for the first time in 1992 before my 1997 visit. I had earlier written of my visit to East London in *African Missionary Pilot*.

In May of 1992, I was off again in flight with Yankee Charlie on one not so clear morning. I lifted from the Fisantekraal Airport with me as the sole passenger aboard. With boxes of literature again stuffed here and there, she and I made our way into the clouds on our way to East London. D.F. Malan Control gave me an initial altitude of 4,500 feet. I was not comfortable with that altitude, knowing that I was flying toward the Hottentot's Holland Mountains in the clouds where there were mountain peaks that reached above my assigned altitude. When they finally cleared me above 4,500, I broke out on top of the clouds, flying parallel to a mountain peak which was above my altitude. I promised myself that I would never let them do that to me again.

After adjusting the autopilot for due east, I was destined for East London. It was a first trip for me to this country-spirited coastal city of South Africa. Leonard Gray had been working with the church for about two years. Leonard was able to encourage this group and bring to it a spirit of growth. Here is one of those situations where God's evangelist performed magnificently in allowing God to use him to lead a flock of His people. Souls will be in heaven as the result of patient works by great servants as Leonard and Marguerite Gray.

I liked the city of East London. Here was one of those not-too-big cities nestled on the coast of South Africa. It was situated between the homelands of Ciskei and Transkei. The cultural flavor of black Africa was evident in the people who were not in that much of a hurry to get from here to there. This social climate restored memories of Caribbean life.

Since East London is a coastal city, coastal breezes rustle by one's

ears and continually stir one's hair. It was not a place to maintain a fancy hair style. The fragrant aroma of sea water warmed one's nostrils as it was blown in from the sea. Restless waves tranquillized one's nerves as they lapped against the warm sun-baked white sands of beautiful beaches. Every morning was a relaxing experience of God's creation. I yearned for the Caribbean.

I could live in a place like East London. The elders twisted my arm to move the Institute there, but I was settled into Cape Town for years to come. At the time, however, I reminded myself never to tear down bridges. I thus told them that I would not shut the door on the invitation. However, without encouraging them, I knew I never could make the move. How could Martha and I ever break our love affair with Cape Town? We had entrenched in Cape Town and the expense of such a move would be prohibitive at the time. However, I never say never when God is working. He has worked too many wonders in my life to ever say never. The exciting thing about being a Christian is the mystery by which God works things together for His purposes. He is able, and does, work exceedingly abundantly above all that we think or envision.

### **On To Venda**

On my '97 visit to Manzini, I concluded sixteen lectures in three days and was off to northern South Africa to the former homeland called Venda. In driving for the first time through the eastern part of South Africa at the time, I was struck with the reality of the tremendous eastern areas of South Africa that needed to be evangelized. I passed through village after village where I assumed there were no Christians.

I must confess again that I became lost going to Swaziland, and again, in driving from Swaziland to Venda. (So much for using old maps and unmarked roads.) However, my lostness gave me the opportunity to discover parts of South Africa that were unevangelized in those days. Eastern South Africa was a wide open field ready for evangelism. At the time, I wondered who would receive the call to take the gospel to these parts of God's world. Much of the work in South Africa in those days was urban, and it was hard to get urbanites out of the cities. Most of the eastern part of South Africa was composed of rural villages.

When the church was first established in South Africa, it was planted first in major city centers as East London, Port Elizabeth, Johannesburg and Cape Town. Somehow, evangelism became bogged down in these beachheads, and today, still cannot seem to get outside the city limits. South African churches feel little calling to reach out of city centers into the smaller cities and hundreds of towns and villages throughout the country. At least in South Africa, the mission method of planting the church first in the major metropolitan areas of a country, and then supposedly moving from those centers to the rural towns and villages of the entire country, has not been realized. In fact, I have not seen this method of evangelism work in most places in either Latin America or Africa where the church was first planted in major metropolitan cities. People in the mega cities of cultures just do not move from these cities to the country towns and villages of a country. They move from the country to the cities, and stay there. This is the migration phenomenon of Developing World countries. After living a generation or two in the city, urbanites have no connection with the rural environment of their forefathers. It is very difficult for an urban dweller to understand rural culture, and thus it is very difficult for urban Christians to reach out to the rural population.

Add to the preceding that the typical South African Christian has very little mission-mindedness. He has little evangelistic initiative to plant the seed of the kingdom throughout the hundreds of rural population centers that are concentrated primarily in the eastern part of the country. Keep in mind that this is not just a South African problem. It is a general problem among Christians that are held up in major population centers with little concern for evangelizing areas outside those centers.

Urban centers have a difficult time in producing church growth simply because the disciples who live in these areas are often too involved in the business of this world. They have little time left for evangelistic outreach. In the Venda region of South Africa, however, the church in this rural setting has grown well over the years. This example among the Venda people is somewhat unique in the history of the growth of the church in South Africa. But keep in mind that Venda

was given its independence from South Africa many years before my first visit there in the late '80s. It was only during the early '90s that the Venda people made the decision to come back into the union of the new South Africa. Venda is now a part of South Africa, though the region is still referred to as Venda. Because the Venda people were an independent country for so many years, they developed the spirit in the country to do their own thing.

The unique Venda people are nestled in the northeast corner of South Africa. Their unique origins and location have presented the opportunity for the church to develop a unique spirit. They are a people of peace and one that has thus developed a unity among all Christians that is truly refreshing.

In 1997 there were thirty-nine churches in Venda. The first church was started in the early 1950s. John and Bessie Hardin were the first missionaries to make trips from Johannesburg to Venda in order to initiate the work. One of the first converts was Samuel Ramagwede. Samuel's story is rather interesting. It is one that has been typical of some great South African church leaders. I cannot relate to you all the details of his life, but there are a few things that need to be recorded in order to explain one of the many African conversions and lives that manifest the tremendous work of God in the lives of Africans. Such examples give hope for a great future of the church.

Samuel was in his twenties and married when he obeyed the gospel. He did not know how old he was since no records of birth were kept in Venda among tribal groups at the turn of the century when he was born. He thought he was born between 1916 and 1918. He was a man without a birthday, a typical situation with many older Africans at the time.

Samuel did not have a "Christian" name for many years. He was simply called the "son of Ramagwede." Many years later in his early life when he was standing in line to receive an identification document from the government, he was asked what his "Christian" name was. On the spot he said he just thought up the name "Samuel." And so, he was given the name Samuel on his identification document. From then on he was known as Samuel Ramagwede.

Samuel was a member of the Salvation Army when he obeyed the gospel in 1955. For eight months he did not tell his wife or parents or the Salvation Army of his baptism because he knew their fierce opposition to any other religion than the Salvation Army. He was a school teacher for the Salvation Army school and did not want to lose his job. Samuel said that he “hid himself.” He also told me, “I finally decided that one must be courageous as a Christian, so I told them of my conversion.” The revelation produced no little disturbance in his extended family. Nevertheless, he was on his way as an influential worker for the Lord to give glory to God. Fortunately, he was able to keep his job as a school teacher. Because he was of royal blood, he was able to acquire grounds for the building of a church building. From his example came many conversions of school teachers in the Venda area. And thus, the foundation was laid upon which the future of the church was built in Venda.

It was Samuel and those who followed him who began the church in Tshidimbini outside the city of Thohoyandou, the first capital of the area. Today, this is a unique and exciting group of disciples and one that has great influence in the Venda area.

One of the unique and biblical practices of the Christians in all of Venda is that all the disciples function as one church. There are presently over sixty assemblies in Venda, but all the Christians of these assemblies function together as the “church of Venda.” The Western concept of assembly autonomy was never introduced among the community of disciples in Venda. They have simply wanted to remain a united group of Christians, regardless of where each Christian assembles on Sunday. They retain their individual freedom in Christ, but have not and do not want to develop the Western concept of being independent from one another as groups. No one taught them to behave this way as the people of God. It came naturally as they understood that they have a common salvation in Christ, and thus, regardless of where they assemble, they are still one united church in Venda. Western churches would do well to take notice of this biblical pattern and do likewise.

After Samuel “came to light,” he said, he helped start the Tshidimbini assembly of disciples. In 1997 there was an average of

550 in attendance in three different assemblies on Sunday morning. Because their facility was small, the junior children came first for their classes. When the children left, the teenage group came. When this shift left, then came the assembly of all those who had obeyed the gospel.

In 1968 Obrien Malindi was baptized by Samuel and is now working from this group to all of Venda. Samuel moved on and started another group in the northern area of Venda where he moved. And from this group where he lived, several other assemblies were established.

There are elders and deacons who meet with the Tshidimbini assembly. What is encouraging about this assembly is its mission outreach. It is presently sending out preaching members to several different small assemblies of the Venda church. The Tshidimbini assembly pays the petrol cost for the preaching members to travel to these other assemblies. They also help in spiritual guidance for churches in the area. At the time I visited, they had a monthly budget for evangelism and edification, and a monthly meeting of preaching members who were involved in mission preaching. This assembly of disciples was a model for many churches who needed to follow their example. This mature group of disciples was setting an example for others as their reputation and work was made known throughout Africa. Though there were sometimes few examples of evangelistically oriented disciples as the Tshidimbini church, at least these disciples were setting a great example for everyone else to follow.

One of the interesting mission techniques of the Tshidimbini Christians was that two members of the church were transferred in their jobs to the city of Pietersburg, South Africa. In their move, they started the church where they lived in Pietersburg (Polokwani). The Tshidimbini church, therefore, was starting the church in Pietersburg by the transfer of members in their jobs. I witnessed the model of the Tshidimbini church being reborn in another city by the influence of members who were born out of the model of a dynamic group of disciples.

The Tshidimbini church of disciples was a great example of a mission church that assumed the responsibility of evangelism. This is the

work of the church. Anything less will only produce stalemate in the growth of the church. We can produce disciples, but if these disciples do not evangelistically reach out to other nations, then they will be dead-end disciples. The church will vanish after the initial generation of converts die out. Evangelism helps a church to have a good self-esteem. Vigor remains in those churches that feel good about doing what they know they are supposed to be doing as disciples of Jesus. Most churches know what they should be doing. Everyone knows Matthew 28:19,20. However, performance of what we should be doing is often far below what we know we should be doing. We thus have a low self-esteem as a church. Low self-esteem leads to spiritual depression, and spiritual depression leads to a dead church.

What is so encouraging about African evangelism is to see the Tshidimbini model emerging among churches throughout the continent. Keep in mind that it took American churches a hundred years or more to develop such mission-mindedness. I think Africa is doing it in less than a fourth of the time where trained missionaries have established churches with the goal of establishing mission churches, not mission points. I am very optimistic about the future of Africa because of what some of the well-trained missionaries who did mission work on the continent. When it comes to mission mindedness, the church movements these missionaries have established are several years ahead of their counterparts that were established in the restoration movement of early America. Such has been the result of good mission training of a mission force since the latter '60s.

### **Bible Seminars**

Seminars in a Third World environment are always a humbling experience for me. It is humbling to stand before Christians who have made so many sacrifices to be present for a Bible study. It is humbling to witness the great thirst for the word of God. In the 1980s to around 2010, I conducted several seminars a year in reference to the outreach of our ministries. Some years I was able to teach forty to forty-five seminars. Every seminar was unique, and in every one I learned a great deal about local cultures.

In teaching these seminars I have found that there is one thing that is usually common for such meetings. That common thing is that one is dealing with the cream of the crop of leaders in church leadership. These leaders are usually very hungry for teaching, just what leaders are to be. Some leaders go to workshops and lectureships to discover some new method of work or program of organization. However, the leaders I have dealt with in seminars in receptive environments are looking for Bible study. This makes African seminars very exciting because many of the leaders come to these meetings with great sacrifice just to study the Bible.

The brethren at the Tshidimbini church, as always, hosted the 1997 seminar for the churches in Venda, Gazankulu and the Pietersburg area. I had driven nine hours on a Friday from Swaziland, and then, lectured an hour the night of my arrival. The all-day lectures on Saturday were on the subject of “Last Things,” a study of Matthew 24, 2 Peter 3 and Revelation 20. Such subjects need to be taught among African churches because the religious world has caused a great deal of confusion in these areas of study.

I concluded the seminar Saturday afternoon at 5:00<sup>PM</sup>, loaded up my traveling home, said good bye, and headed for the Zimbabwe border. I futilely hoped to reach Musina before sundown. But as the sun slid over the western horizon, I resolved that I would construct my tent in the dark. It was a quiet night in Mussina until this motorcyclist decided to drive his motorcycle, which had no muffler, around in the campgrounds at about ten o’clock at night. He made about five circuits around the grounds before I was up with my flashlight for a polite gesture that such behavior could not exist at a public campsite. After he shut the noise down, the rest of us were able to tuck ourselves away for some sleep. Thus I christened this camp Motorcycle Lodge.

The next morning I was up, across the Beitbridge border, into Zimbabwe, and on to Mutare. After a nonstop six hour drive, it was good to be in the care of some of God’s beautiful people, Loy and Donna Mitchell. It was also good, after three years, to be with the 7<sup>th</sup> and Jubilee church to begin a gospel meeting with the church that night and a seminar with the Mutare Bible School the next day.

## Chapter 13

### EASTERN ZIMBABWE

Loy and Donna Mitchell arrived in Zimbabwe in 1958. In those days it was called Southern Rhodesia. Present-day Zambia was called Northern Rhodesia. Since the days the Mitchells arrived, a lot had changed in Zimbabwe, not only in the government, but also in the church. The government took the country back a century in economy. The church, however, had grown from a small beginning to a very mature work that continues to grow. Throughout the years, the Mitchells were special workers of God in a country that truly felt the impact of their labors. There had always been something special about Loy and Donna. They had a great spirit and evangelistic outreach. I suppose one of the special things about them was that they were from Kansas, my home state.

When I arrived in May 1997, Loy and Donna had already made a decision to return to the States in August. Such was going to be the end of another magnificent chapter in the history of mission outreach of the church in Africa. The Mitchells had served well in Zimbabwe. They left an eternal mark of godliness on the African work.

Donna wrote a book about God's work in Zimbabwe through their efforts. It is entitled *Among the People of the Sun—Our Years in Africa* (J. C. Choate Publications, Winona, MS). Any missionary headed for Africa must read this volume. It is not only the story of a legacy, but also an introduction to life in Africa. It is also the story of the "right stuff" of which missionaries are made, the stuff that is essential to be an effective worker of God as a missionary.

### Mutare, Zimbabwe

I made several visits to the Mutare Bible School during the '90s. For whatever it is worth, it is my opinion that it was at that time one of the better resident training schools of Africa because of the staff that was then associated with the school. The high quality of training it maintained throughout those years produced some graduates who are

today some of the great leaders in the church in Zimbabwe. The present leadership of the church is a testimony to the high standards of the teachers and brother Mitchell who maintained quality in the instruction that was given in the classroom in those days. I believe such was also the result of the great spiritual stature of Loy Mitchell.

Every time I passed through Mutare in the '90s the brethren worked me well. Mornings always started at 7:00<sup>AM</sup> with a study for the local employees of some industry. On the particular visit of 1997, I preached daily for the engineering business of one of the brethren in the church. From 10:00 to 12:45 I lectured at the Mutare Bible School. At 1:15<sup>PM</sup> I lectured at the church building. And finally, at 6:00<sup>PM</sup> we were back to the church building for the final lecture of the day. Those were good days for the church in Mutare.

Though at the time Loy and Donna were returning to the States, the influence of their efforts would continue for several years. Both had a tremendous reputation for good in southern Africa. I suppose I will miss Donna the most. She was the one who always had the greatest cinnamon rolls prepared for visiting preachers as myself. I will miss Loy for he always had a hug waiting for me in Mutare. Mutare has never been the same without the Mitchells.

### **Harare, Zimbabwe**

After five days in Mutare on the '97 trip, it was on to Harare, the capital of Zimbabwe. At 4:30<sup>AM</sup> I pulled out of Mutare on streets that had not yet awakened to a new day. I had lectured forty-eight times in the past two weeks on this trip across Africa. Only one time did my voice feel like calling it quits. That only happens when I get overexcited in lectures and start preaching. A little self-discipline and a day's drive brought me back to almost normal. In keeping such a schedule of speaking as on that trip, it was imperative that one determine the point at which you are straining your voice. I do not have a strong voice, and thus, have to watch myself. However, after I settled down during the lectures, I could usually go indefinitely. The African brethren have always wondered why I could just keep going after two or three translators were tired. The only reason I know how I could lecture for eight

to ten hours a day, day after day, was the supplied strength of the Lord.

Another thing that greatly helped was the use of a portable stool I used during some of the lectures. If you can sit down during some of the lectures throughout the day, your endurance is greatly enhanced. I can, or used to be able when I was a little younger, handle about eight to ten hours a day in lectures if I sat down sometime during the period of lectures. On this particular trip, I had Barbara Kee send me from the States this cute little folding stool. It folded into a flat configuration and would easily fit almost anywhere. Therefore, I had stool, and would travel and teach.

This was a special leg of my journey as I made the turns out of Mutare up the mountain, and then into the fog of the plains toward Harare. Martha was supposed to arrive at 10:00<sup>AM</sup> in Harare after a three-day train trip from Cape Town. She, Don and Rita Boyd, Norm and Mary Rhodes, with two Cape Town brethren, Denville Willie and John Ford, were coming on the train from the Cape in order to attend the Africans Claiming Africa Conference that was to be conducted in the city of Chinhoyi north of Harare. They first took the twenty-four hour trip from Cape Town to Johannesburg, and then, another twenty-four hour trip from Johannesburg to Harare. It was a lot of “clackity, clack” on the train all the way from Cape Town.

The train was about five hours late, but after not seeing Martha for a month, it was certainly great to be reunited for the week we spent at the conference. Longtime friends, Norm and Mary Rhodes, had flown to Cape Town. From there they joined the Capetonians on their way north to the conference. It was great being with them for the week.

### **The ACA Conference**

It is sometimes good to go to the mountain top with those of a common desire and destiny in life. Such an occasion had been provided in Nairobi, Kenya in 1992 with the first Africans Claiming Africa Conference. It was happening again with this second conference in Chinhoyi.

The purpose of the conference was originally designed to encourage key African leaders to assemble together for a week of planning,

prayer and more planning to evangelize Africa. The location that was selected for the 1997 conference was Chinhoyi, Zimbabwe, about an hour north of Harare. Participants came from seventeen different countries.

There are always highlights to one's work among evangelists that form unforgettable impressions on one's mind. The ACA conference was one of those occasions that changed one's life. There is something about meeting together with those of a common vision. And when those who are assembled have come from diverse areas of a continent that is burning with receptivity, a dynamic occurs that cannot be written on paper. You would have to be there to understand. It was a spiritual euphoria to listen to the tremendous things God was doing on a continent that seems to have perpetual receptivity.

Ever since European missionaries stepped foot on the African continent, receptivity has been here. The continent has not come in and out of receptivity as the western world. Africans have historically listened to and obeyed the gospel. When the western world fell away to scientism and humanism, the African simply continued to listen with his heart to a message that gives him hope in a world of poverty, political upheaval and famine. There are those who may call themselves Christian, but the African villager is still listening and struggling to be Christian in an often hostile environment.

If one identifies his life after the mission of his Master, then it is spiritually exhilarating to listen to reports of what God is doing among the Gentiles (At 11:18; 14:26,27). During the ACA meeting we heard of church growth in northern Ghana. Over seventy assemblies of Christians came into existence in the last four years before the ACA conference. We heard of church growth reported in western Tanzania. Over seventy churches were established in a three and a half year period. We heard of church growth in southern Malawi. Over seven thousand were baptized in 1996. We heard the report of over 3,500 churches in the nation of Malawi as of 1997. We heard of the Rainbow church in Nairobi, Kenya sending out a mission team to Tanzania. We heard of the one thousand member strong Answan church in Accra, Ghana training preachers, and sending them forth. After a few days, one wonders how much good news you can absorb.

The ACA conference was not a lectureship. It was not a workshop or gospel meeting. It was a meeting of dreamers and planners who lived on a continent that was fast becoming the geographical center of Christianity. Within the first decade of the 21<sup>st</sup> century, the church had grown to be larger in sub-Saharan Africa than in any other place of the world. If the Lord does not come for another century or two, the dreamers and planners of present-day Africa are laying the foundation for decades of church growth to come. This was the focus of the ACA conference in those days.

One of the great things about meetings as the ACA conference is that one has the privilege of meeting with brethren from many different cultures. It is thus interesting to witness the worshipful behavior of different cultures.

Every culture is characterized by its own unique way of worship. Man is a worshipful being. How this worship comes forth from the heart of individuals is different in the different cultures around the world. At least one thing is important to understand. The New Testament does not demand that one culture clone another as to how one must express his or her worship. One problem that is often encountered in missions is that we have a tendency as missionaries to export our cultural manifestations of praise to other cultures. Within African cultures, there is a great variation as to how the Africans express themselves in mannerisms when they as individuals feel close to God and when they feel a great realization of the presence of God. Our freedom in Christ guarantees that one culture cannot bind its manner of praising God on another culture. As long as our worship is within the definition of God's word, then tremendous variety is allowed by the word of God in the mannerisms that will result from one's outpouring of praise to God. After all, there is nothing said in the Scriptures about how one should personally behave in the assembly. The only restriction is that all things be done decently and in order (1 Co 14:40).

I believe one of the memorable thoughts of the 1997 ACA Conference was expressed by Dan McVay who recalled a question that was asked of him by an African brother. The brother questioned, "Why do not Americans fast?" Dan's answer was indirect, but understood. "Men

do not fast when they have a limited belief in the work of God.”

Dan’s thought has sparked a host of thoughts in my own life and thinking. The Westerner has a problem with self-sufficiency. He has all the bases covered. Every aspect of life is insured and protected. He carries out strikes on the job in order to guarantee retirement benefits and hospitalization. He focuses on every movement of the stock exchange and interest rates. His life is guarded and protected by every means possible. And if he has everything worked out according to his own planning, who needs to depend on God?

I realize I am preaching here, but I am preaching to myself. Members of the church in Developing World situations need a big God, One who is able to do exceedingly abundantly above all that we can think. When one realizes that he needs the help of this God, then prayer and fasting come forth from the individual who seeks to call on God for help.

One’s total dependence on God drives us to fasting and prayer. Our dependence on ourselves drives us away from trust (faith) in God, and thus, away from pleading for His guidance in life. Our prayers thus digress to formal performances and chatter filled with subjunctives and “blesseds.” Does God have to pull the economic carpet out from under the psychological stability we have in a material world in order to move us to fasting and prayer? What must God do to make us depend on Him? Yes, I’m preaching again.

I believe the 1997 ACA Conference spoke some very clear pronouncements to us who are evangelists and to those sending churches who are seeking to send missionaries into all the world.

Africans are saying, “We have to depend entirely on God in our hostile political and physical environments. Please do not bring to us a ritualistic religion that is void of faith in the grace of God.”

Africans are saying, “We live on a continent that has a long history of idolatrous and pagan beliefs. Please do not bring us a syllogistic world view that consolidates all things to premises and conclusions.”

Africans are saying, “Thank you for the jump start of faith. Now we must interpret and apply Scripture from our African world view in order to bring faith alive on the African continent.”

Africans are saying, “Thank you America for your leadership. We are now coming into our own. Do not desert us, for we are brothers and we desire the close fellowship of the American church in claiming the rest of the continent.”

Africans are saying, “You have taught us much Bible, but there are some things with which we deal on our continent for which you have no answers. Allow us the opportunity to search the Scriptures in order to deal with our problems.”

Africans are saying, “We now have Bibles and can read for ourselves. Please do not bring us your issues and matters of opinion that divide us from one another.”

Africans are saying, “We come from a tribal culture, therefore, please do not ask us to work independent of one another on a continent that demands that we be the universal church to war against the wiles of the devil.”

There are fifty-two nations on the continent of Africa. Of the 15,000 plus churches of Christ in Africa in 1991, the greater percentage were in only seven of those countries. Africa needs more evangelists. Africans are not saying that the foreign evangelist must go home. Africans can carry on in those areas where the church is established. And even in those areas, the foreign evangelist is still needed in capacities where they can hold up the hands of local brethren with literature and leadership teaching. But there are also the vast majority of nations of Africa that have yet to hear the gospel of Jesus. There are thousands of villages, towns and cities that must be reached.

In those places where the church in Africa has been in existence for two or three decades, there is a tremendous foundation of leadership in qualified elders and evangelists. African brethren, however, as well as all who know the vastness of Africa, realize the tremendous amount of work that is yet to be done. There are a host of nations that have yet to be evangelized.

Poverty, political upheaval and disease will keep Africa receptive for decades to come. Western churches must work hand in hand with established African churches in order to evangelize this continent. It is too large a field to simply say to the African church, “You take it from

here.” This cannot be done, not even for the next hundred years. The African church needs all the help it can get in order to take advantage of the continuous receptivity of African cultures. It is for this reason that great partnerships must be worked out between the church of the West and the church of Africa in order to evangelize a continent that is now beyond one billion souls.

## **Chapter 14**

### **TOUCHED THROUGH MOZAMBIQUE**

When I departed from the ACA Conference, in order to make my way out of Zimbabwe and into Malawi, I had to once again pass through Mozambique. Passing through the Tete corridor in those days always reminded me of the first impressions I previously had of this country when Martha, Cindy, Lisa and I went this way to Malawi in 1991. They were impressions that were formed as a result of witnessing the after effects of an African civil war. The times were somewhat better when I recorded in *African Missionary Pilot* the following journey that I made in 1993.

We were up at 5:30<sup>AM</sup> on Friday in Harare, Zimbabwe and at the Zimbabwe-Mozambique border a little before 7:00<sup>AM</sup>. It had been about a year since the peace accord was signed to stop the almost two decade civil war in Mozambique. I was curious as to what changes had been made and how the country was progressing. Two years had transpired since I had been through the northern part of the country. At that time it was the worst situation I had ever experienced in all my travels as a missionary. In fact, Mozambique had the reputation at that time for being the poorest country in the world. It was worse than Haiti, and when something is worse than Haiti, it is bad.

After entry into the country at the Mutare border, we drove inland for about seventy miles and then turned north. As we traveled, United Nations troops were patrolling the roads. At least this gave us a sense of security, whether perceived or actual, for rebel soldiers still lingered in the bush. Nevertheless, people were out and busy about their lives. As

we motored by villages, we sensed a culture that civilization and time had passed by. If David Livingstone was reincarnated today and passed by these ways, he would probably witness no change in the 150 years since he had landed in Africa.

An encouraging sign was the constructing of huts here and there. This was at least a positive sign that people were looking toward the future, seeking to survive a civil war. Some of the old round huts were giving way to homemade clay bricks that were used to put together square one-roomed houses. People had been in the gardens, tilling fruits and vegetables. Signs of a new beginning were everywhere.

This was a country ready for evangelism. However, in the summer of 1993 we had yet to organize anything to evangelize Mozambique. One missionary visited the country a few months before our visit. He reported that the villagers laid down their garments on his path because they had not seen a missionary for so long.

One thing about the Mozambique people that impressed us was their great friendliness. Children and adults alike waved as we passed by. When we stopped, people were more than curious and friendly. These were a people waiting for someone to come with the good news. I wondered at the time how long it would take before we really made an effort to go into this country. All I could think about when traveling through the country was the great opportunity that was developing for evangelism.

### **Through The Eyes Of A Teenager**

Our daughter Lisa passed through Mozambique in 1991 when she was seventeen and again when she was nineteen. After the first trip she wrote an article about her impressions of the country and her experience of seeing firsthand the results of a senseless civil war. It is interesting to look through the eyes of a seventeen year old in order to feel what she experienced. The following is her article:

#### *Realities of Mozambique*

*Living most of my life outside the United States has really opened my eyes to a lot of new realities. I began my journey through life by moving from the States when I was nine months old. For twenty years my family*

*and I became vagabonds wandering from country to country. My father kept telling me, "Lisa, one day you will appreciate my dragging you all over the world." Somehow, today I can hear those words so clearly in my head. Don't tell him, but he was right.*

*Of all my expeditions, one stands out so clearly in my mind. Twice, while living in South Africa, we had the "privilege" of traveling through Mozambique. On the first trip, I was almost looking forward to the adventure. Traveling through Mozambique would be a new experience for me, and I am always ready for new and exciting adventures. Mozambique had been in a civil war for about twenty years. A country in war must be the most horrifying thing to see. From my experience of traveling through Mozambique and seeing a country after war, I have yet to figure out the real purpose of a war of that kind. I have tried to open my mind to this concept, but all I can see is a senseless battle to determine who is stronger.*

*I recall being at the border the first time we visited Mozambique. We were going to travel in a military convoy across the northern part of the country. I remember all the instructions that we were given. We were told how fast or rather how slow we must go and what to do in case the rebels opened fire. All the feelings of fear were racing through my body at this point. I don't think that I have ever prayed so much in my life.*

*I can remember the first taste of poverty caused by war. This is not the kind of poverty that we see here in the States; these people were extremely poor. After living in such a materialistic world of my own I could not believe my eyes when I saw these people. We drove up to the border and about twenty children ran up to our car, wanting to sell their oranges that they had somehow managed to steal or buy or whatever. We didn't have any change with us, but they were very happy to exchange their oranges for our cookies. After starting a small riot with our cookies, we proceeded to travel through a desolate land with our stomachs already in knots. We had to travel in a convoy consisting of a variety of cars, trucks and military personnel carriers. Although it was unnerving, it gave us a sense of security to be with everyone else in the convoy.*

*It took us about ten long and hot hours to travel through the drought-stricken land. In those ten hours we saw nothing but a sparse number of*

*people who were holding out in the main towns. The pain on the locals' faces made my heart heavy; it was awful to see those people in so much pain.*

*The roads and bridges we traveled were awful. The land was so dry and desolate. I recall being greeted at the border on the Mozambiquean side by soldiers with AK47 rifles. My stomach was really turning in knots by this time. I can still hear the tone that my father used when he talked to the commodore of the soldiers. I do not believe that my family had ever been so quiet and still before.*

*When we left Mozambique and entered the country of Malawi, a calm swept over us. Although the mood was much lighter, all of us felt the impact that Mozambique had forever left on our minds and hearts. I don't think that any of us will forget that experience into which we were tossed.*

*Three years later we would have the opportunity of passing Mozambique's path once again. This time I felt it would not be as bad as before because the country had declared peace several months before we arrived. We were all hoping that this time it would be different, maybe even fun. At the border we were again greeted by the usual group of children, but many more of them and fewer oranges. Because of the declaration of peace, a lot of the Mozambiqueans had returned to their homes or what was left of their homes.*

*Before beginning our journey, we were given another set of instructions. These instructions seemed to be a bit more outrageous. First, we were told that the main road had been cleared of land mines, but the side roads had not yet been cleared. Great care was to be taken not to use those side roads. The pamphlet also stated that the war trenches across the roads had been filled, but this was not advisable to drive over them too fast. I do not believe that the workers who constructed the road knew what level was. The patches on the road must have been at least three inches above the surrounding road. It became our main concern to get through Mozambique as quick as we could in order to get to Malawi before sundown. But the construction on the roads and bridges prevented us from making very good time.*

*We traveled once again through the countryside with the common jolt-*

*ing of our vehicle. We rode over the patches of repairs in the road and we saw nothing that resembled a normal nation. We saw burnt vehicles and tanks on the side of the road. After some time we would stop to heed the call of nature and saw bullet casings discarded here and there. Whatever had not been burned out had been demolished so that it was unrecognizable. I could not believe that such damage could be done in one place. The sight of this country would have made the strongest man sob. I remember feeling so guilty driving in a nice vehicle that was full of food and clothes. I felt useless and selfish.*

*Although the war was over, the memory of it was still so vivid everywhere. Soldiers were still in sight and food still scarce.*

*I remember having mixed feelings about these trips through Mozambique. I sometimes wish I had never seen the sights of war and poverty. At other times I am glad that I have seen and tasted reality. I wish that I could better explain my feelings and thoughts. I wish I could better explain the sights that I saw. Somehow I believe that one cannot begin to understand such a thought unless one personally experiences it first hand. My only wish is that some people will fully understand and will grasp the concept of the reality of what a war can do to a country and its people.*

Lisa Faye Dickson (January 21, 1994)

## **Chapter 15**

### **ON TO LAND-LOCKED MALAWI**

Martha and I certainly appreciated the special prayer those of the ACA conference had for us in 1997 after the conference. One of the elders of the Rainbow church in Nairobi, Kenya and Glen Boyd, the director of African Christian Hospitals, offered a public prayer while we were at the conference in order to encourage us and ask for the help of God in the continued travel of my series of seminars and meetings up through Africa in '97. Martha was off to return to Cape Town via a three-day train trip. After catching up with the Institute course processing, she would be off to the States for two and a half months. I was off

to Malawi and the north country, still planning on going on to Egypt via the Red Sea.

During the ACA conference, I had fortunately distributed much of the materials that I had hauled about 2,500 miles up from Cape Town. Martha had also brought some up on the train. Many of those at the conference were returning to the places to which I was going, so it helped a great deal to have them take this material back home in preparation for seminars I would soon conduct. With all the material, the Nissan was squatting in agony. But after off-loading the materials, the springs were not bent backward, and thus I was ready for more difficult roads.

So I headed out again with God as my navigator for the Zimbabwe/Mozambique border. It was only an hour's drive from Chinhoyi to Harare, and after a couple of missed turns in Harare, I was on my way east toward Mozambique. It was a smooth road, little traffic and good cruising about twenty miles east of Harare. But then there was this swash and wobble. Sure enough, the left rear tire blew out through the side wall. This was not encouraging for these were almost new Michelin tires with less than 10,000 miles on them. And this one just gave in, or better, gave out. I then wondered about the reliability of the other three.

Nevertheless, I worked up a good sweat in changing the tire with a full load of literature in the back. I had packed all the tire changing equipment so neatly in the vehicle in different places that it took some time to sort it all out. After about thirty minutes, the tire was changed and I was on my way back to Harare.

At the first petrol station I asked where I could get a tire that would match the ones that were on the Nissan. The attendant said it was one of those "fancy" tires which he did not have. He knew of only one place where a similar tire could be bought. I was thus directed across town to a repair station that fortunately had only two left of the size that matched, though it was not a Michelin. I took one and was on my way after two hours of delay.

The evening sun had made its way to bed by the time I pulled up to the Zimbabwe/Mozambique border. It was nuts and granola bars for

supper and an apple for desert. Really, it was good. I'm one of those guys who can live off nuts and granola bars and soup. Tastes great, but frustrates others to no end who travel with me. I remember one time when Adrian Blow from Cape Town and Kurt Platt from Swaziland were with me when we were visiting Angolan refugees in northern Namibia in 1991. We headed out from Cape Town on a nonstop leg to get to the refugee camps in the north of Namibia. By the second day of traveling, Kurt could not stand it anymore. We had been eating potato chips and nuts and whatnot in the vehicle without stopping for any decent food. We stopped at a store and the first thing Kurt did was buy onions, tomatoes, flour and an assortment of other things that he could mix into something that tasted better than nuts and apples. Frankly, we were all ready for something different.

At the Zimbabwe/Mozambique border I kept the petrol station from closing in order to fuel up for the next day. There was a nice secluded place at the station in the bushes. That was home for the night and I christened it Disco Lodge because when I tried to doze off, I had to listen to the beat of a disco that was not too far down from where I was struggling to sleep. Nevertheless, the sleeping spot had to do for this night for there was nowhere else to go.

### **Malawi, The Beautiful**

I "unsnaled" myself from my cozy cocoon in the back of the Nissan at the border and woke to another day. I had winked off about two good hours of sleep that night so I was not in the best of conditions. I thus awoke with a distorted face and wrinkled bones and aching knees, complaining about my predicament.

So I was through the Zimbabwe/Mozambique border and on my way to Malawi. I did not stop in Mozambique until I had passed through the country via Tete to the Mozambique/Malawi border. From the border I was off to somewhere in the south, down in the bushes of Malawi where I had received an invitation from one of the students of the Institute who would amaze me concerning zeal and evangelism.

Roads were descent to Blantyre. However, just south of Blantyre things began to digress. I was down to five miles an hour, creeping

from one pothole to another, from one pounding jerk to another. It was a miserable road.

I must mention this high pitched squeak that was somewhere inside the cab of the Nissan. It had been there since I bought the vehicle. I had tightened every screw, wiggled every imaginable thing that could possibly squeak in order to find this most persistent and annoying squeak. But it was impossible to find this little mouse who was somewhere concealed in the crevices of machinery of the Nissan. It had tormented me to no end, but then I thought that maybe it was God's means to develop patience in me. But when driving on rough roads, it was always there ... squeak ... squeak ... squeak. So there I was squeaking south of Blantyre on roads that did not deserve the name.

I worked my way through Blantyre and was headed south on the Malinje road after a brief moment of being lost somewhere off the beaten path. I could never explain to you where I was. There were no signs in Blantyre in those days. One just stops and asks for directions.

On my way out of Blantyre, I knew the roads could not get worse. Wrong! They digressed into chaos and in a five geared transmission, I was down between third and fourth before long. I thought things could not get worse. Wrong again! I was then down between second and third. Could the roads get worse? Right! I went between first and second, then between first and stop. In Angola a year before this trip I encountered the most difficult roads of my life. But in Angola they had just concluded a war. They had an excuse. There had been no war in Malawi, just the normal African system of government in reference to roads.

I must say that I felt sorry for myself. I had been on the road all day and was rattling my brain around somewhere off in the bush of southern Malawi. I wondered why I had ever allowed myself to be talked into visiting this particular student of the Institute. His persistent pleas had caught me in a moment of weakness and I said I would come and see what he had done and teach a seminar for the leaders. So there I was joggling over roads that should be called river beds. I was asking every living being along the way if I were on the right path and going in the right direction.

I was glad I was alone, for if anyone had been with me they would be wobbling around inside the cab as I and a host of boxes were so doing. I even thought I should stop this nonsense, throw out the tent and call it quits. Discouragement almost lapsed into depression as I kept hearing that familiar African pronouncement concerning how far ahead it is, “Not much further. Not much further.”

As the sun began to call it another day, I finally saw a small building which had written on it “Migowi.” I was too beaten to rejoice. I simply sighed and wondered where from here I should go. This preacher who had talked me into this ordeal said that he would meet me at the post office. So I meandered down the main street of the small village of Migowi at no more than two miles an hour. Any faster would have been disaster for me and pedestrians. I found the little post office and up walked this young man who said, “Brother Dickson?” I was found.

From here on things changed. I want to tell you a most fantastic story, one that will thrill your heart. It is one that made me repent of all the complaining I did in trying to get to this middle of nowhere place.

### **Beginnings For Christ**

In 1994 a young man by the name of McOnly Richardson Salima, one of the students of the Institute, realized that he had a gift to preach. He felt that God wanted him to preach to his people. He was twenty-two years old and felt a deep sense of responsibility to save, as he said, “Those of his own country as Paul.” He thus set out to study the Bible. He told me that he would study so intently that when his mother set food before him, he would ignore it and continue on in his study of the Bible.

McOnly eventually set up a study schedule from 4:00<sup>AM</sup> to 6:00<sup>AM</sup>, memorizing a chapter of the New Testament each day and also reading five to seven chapters a day. He would then go to the fields to work his crops. In the evenings he studied from 6:00<sup>PM</sup> to 9:00<sup>PM</sup>. Someone in 1995 gave him the address of the Institute. His contact with the Institute set him on a course that would by 1997 bring over 600 people into Christ and the beginnings of a small restoration movement in southern Malawi.

McOnly lived an hour and half walk out of the small village of Migowi in southern Malawi. He was a farmer of about one acre where he grew corn, sorghum and sunflower seeds. The food he produced from the farm had to go to feeding the fifteen dependents of the extended family that lived together on the farm. Only when they had a bountiful year were they able to sell any grain for money. This was their only means by which to earn some money. Unfortunately, there were few years when they had a surplus of grain to sell. Money was very scarce.

McOnly studied in formal education through the eighth grade. Because the family had no more money—it cost about twenty dollars a year for school—he had to drop out of school. His only schooling since dropping out was his personal studies and link with the Cape Town Institute.

In 1995 McOnly began to work for the Lord. He started preaching wherever he could. He knew God wanted him to save the people through the preaching of the gospel. So he preached everywhere. He said that he would go to a friend's house and begin preaching to a few, then to ten or twelve as the group grew. From this a church would be born in the house as people were baptized into Christ. He started his first house church in 1995. He was twenty-three years old at the time. From this first group he set out to start others. He walked from one village to another, pleading with people to give themselves to God. He walked five to six hours south of his farm and started another church. Then there was another, and another, until by May 1997 he had established ten churches in a five-hour walking radius around his farm. There were over six hundred members in the ten churches. There were also three elders.

When the war raged in Mozambique a few years before my visit, refugees from Mozambique fled into southern Malawi and into McOnly's area. The refugees stayed seven years. Most learned the Chichewa language of the area which was similar to their home language. Thus, when they returned to Mozambique after the war, McOnly had already established friends with many of the refugees. Some had been converted. When these brothers returned to their home country

they asked McOnly in 1995 to come and preach to the western regions of Mozambique where they had established their farms. So McOnly set out. It was a three day walk across country. As a result of this missionary work, two churches were established in December 1995 in Mozambique.

McOnly's schedule was demanding. He worked the farm during the planting and harvest season. This was about three to four months out of the year. During the dry season he intensified his evangelistic outreach since there was little to do on the farm.

Once a month on Wednesday, he gathered all the preachers together for a training session of four to five hours. They met at different locations, but at the time he was planning to build rooms on his farm in order that they have a place to come and stay more than one day for studies. He had been working this program since 1995. McOnly said his system of training preachers was: (1) Prayer. (2) Read the word. (3) Preach the sermon first to yourself. (4) Pray about the message you are going to preach. (5) Preach to the people. I guess you cannot get much better than that.

At the time of my visit he was teaching the leaders the materials of the Institute. Since most of the preachers did not know English, he taught them in Chichewa and gave them the heart of the messages to preach. Because a Bible cost three-day's wages of the menial worker's salary—that is, if you had a job—there were few Bibles in the area. As of April 1997 there were eleven Bibles among the ten churches. When it was the turn for a particular preacher to preach, he was issued the Bible to prepare his lesson.

Every three months McOnly made the three day walk to Mozambique in order to work with the churches. He took with him a team of ten to twelve workers. They walked seven to eight hours a day and spent the nights with friends along the way. There were two Bibles among the Mozambique churches, so they were on their way as established groups. He had great plans to start many churches in the Mozambique nation for he believed that Jesus had commanded that we must go into all nations and preach the gospel to every creature.

McOnly had a system of church planting which he described as

follows: (1) Have a friend open his house for preaching. (2) Begin by preaching to a few. (3) Increase the number of attendance by invitations. (4) Continue the meeting throughout the day for two full days. (5) Designate two leaders to assist in the continued work and establishment of the church. By this simple means of evangelism, he had established many churches.

When I was present with him, I conducted a two day seminar for the leaders. However, immediately after the seminar he was on his way to the capital of Blantyre to start another church. He and a fellow worker were then on their way to southern Malawi to start churches among the victims of a flood. He said of the flood victims, "The government is giving food and shelter in the camps because their possessions were washed away. We must go and feed them spiritual food." So off he went.

I have related this story because it illustrates the norm for many African "Apollos" preachers. They are very zealous for the Lord. In often very hostile environments they make every sacrifice necessary to get the job done. These are the type of men who will evangelize Africa. There are great preachers living in the cities, but it is the rural African preacher who will take the African church into a rural harvest that is white unto harvesting. Our ministry in literature is to find these "Apollos" preachers and nurture them on in the word of God. This was the fundamental purpose of Africa International Missions.

If we do not remember and activate our responsibility to evangelize the world, God will regardless of us, find those who will get the job done. He is thus raising up men like Salima throughout the world in order to get the job done. They are there preaching and leading and sacrificing. They are doing the best they can with what they know and have. We will never know of all these faithful workers. Nevertheless, they are out there. Praise God for these "Apollos" men who are preaching the word. My heart is thrilled to know that God can do such great works through such humble servants.

We must assume that similar restoration movements are happening throughout the world. Simply because they are not known to us does not mean that they are not there and thriving. God's work does

not depend on our knowledge of it. He simply works. The power of His word is still alive today when it is received by sincere hearts who want to do what He says.

Such movements have several challenges because the leaders are struggling to rid themselves of a great deal of religious baggage. The leaders of these efforts often have a limited understanding of the Bible. However, they base their teaching on a fundamental belief in God and obedience to the gospel. Because these men are the result of sincere hearts who are seeking to know the truth and obey what they know, they could use some help. They already have leadership skills. The existing leadership of these movements need encouragement and study material.

The leaders of the Migowi restoration have dreams of starting many churches. Their dreams are to reach into and evangelize Mozambique. It is their desire to continue with church planting throughout southern Malawi. They have their struggles, but as long as they struggle in prayer and study of the word of God, they will continue down the right road. I have long lost contact with Salima. He is only one illustration of thousands of men with whom Martha and I have labored in providing the *Teacher's Bible* and *Biblical Research Library*. Their number is so vast that the most productive way we have learned to take "Apollos" preachers on in their knowledge of the Bible is through the distribution of the *Teacher's Bible* and *Biblical Research Library* volumes.

## **Chapter 16**

### **TEACHING THROUGH MALAWI**

Malawi is a very interesting place to minister the word of God. Anyone who has been to this unique environment of Africa will understand what I mean. There is a hungering and thirsting after Bible study in this country that is very refreshing. The thousands of churches in 1997 in this country of thirteen million will give you some idea of the receptivity of the nation. There are more Christians per capita in Malawi than in any other nation of the world.

## **The Namikango Mission**

Lendel and Peggy Wilkes are a part of the history of the church in Malawi. They first came to the country in 1964 and lived through the tremendous years of growth of the church. When they came to Malawi, they came to Malawi to work with the Namikango Mission in Thondwe. This mission was established by B. Shelbourne in the early 1960s a short time before their arrival.

The Namikango Mission was established to minister to the needs of the people in the area of southern Malawi. It has since been a focal point of ministry to the needs of the people, not only in all of southern Malawi, but also in neighboring Mozambique. The dedicated work of both Lendel and Peggy, and those of the Namikango Mission, have led to the conversion of thousands and the establishment of hundreds of fellowship groups in both Malawi and Mozambique.

The seminar that was conducted on the '97 trip was a historical event. Over three hundred preachers and church leaders attended the meeting, representing hundreds of assemblies of the church in southern Malawi. It was the largest assembly of preachers and church leaders ever conducted at the Namikango Mission. It was an inspiring event, especially when realizing the hundreds of churches that were impacted by the attendance of Bible teachers who ministered to these churches. Events as these are visual reminders of the great work that God is doing in Africa.

I considered it a privilege to be able to address such a great assembly of men for two days with in-depth studies of the Bible. The more I traveled and did seminars throughout Africa the more I realized that one of the great works evangelists can do is to conduct seminars for first generation leaders. We must continually train church leaders to do their own work. They can evangelize the continent if we will encourage and train faithful men who will be able to teach others also. Educational and motivational seminars prepare and encourage local workers. Actually, missionaries in areas of established African churches should view themselves as a catalyst to the Africans' work. There are places where missionaries can pioneer the preaching of the gospel. However, in those areas where the church is established, the missionary's role is

usually different. The missionary is definitely needed, but his role is usually more in the area of holding up the hands of local church disciples who can often do a better job.

The church in any region of the world needs continual encouragement. As stated before, this was one of the major roles of the work of the early evangelists. Paul and Barnabas “*returned to Lystra, Iconium, and Antioch strengthening the souls of the disciples*” (At 14:21,22). The Jerusalem church sent out Barnabas to Antioch, and thus, he went among the churches, encouraging “*them all that they should continue with the Lord*” (At 11:23). After establishing churches, Paul desired to revisit such churches in order to encourage them and see how they were doing (At 15:36). He and Silas went throughout the regions of Galatia in order to strengthen the churches in the faith (At 16:5). There will always be a need for evangelists to go among the churches in order to strengthen them. It does not make any difference from where these evangelists come. The fact is that they are always needed because they bring practical Bible knowledge and application of methods that often take years for isolated disciples to learn.

I say this because we sometimes become a little protective with our work and find ourselves hindering other evangelists from coming into our area. In fact, we sometimes become like Diotrophes who rejected the coming of the apostle John and other evangelists into the area over which he lorded the flock of God (3 Jn 6-9). Evangelists who teach the word of God must always be welcome. Regardless of their origin, we must welcome any brother who knows and loves the truth.

Long-term missions must include seminars and workshops that are designed to strengthen the churches in the faith. This was a major work of some of the long-term missionaries I visited on the 1997 seminar safari. It was good to see the work of these men and women who were doing some very effective works in the area of church edification and discipleship training. For the sake of the health of the church, there will always be the need for those who can come with new ideas in order to challenge ineffective methods and behavior. Disciples who are resistant to new ideas and teaching become stagnant and often institutionally set in their own traditions.

Western evangelists offer a vital source of information and spirit when it comes to strengthening the churches. There are limits to which the Western evangelists can fully identify with and relate to Developing World cultures. However, the experience and initiative of the Western evangelists usually allows him the opportunity to have a great impact on the church in any world environment. This is especially true with those evangelists who have been in the field for several years. Instead of retiring older evangelists, the church should challenge them to move among the churches, imparting their great wisdom and knowledge of the word.

People who live in Developing World environments often do not have the resources for information and ideas as those in the developed world. And even good ideas that are being used in other Developing World areas have a hard time being conveyed across the country to other areas. Seminars and workshops are crucial opportunities for churches to assemble together to learn new ideas. It is an opportunity to learn and try something new.

In Africa, tradition is a very important part of the social structure of local communities. I often state during a seminar, “Africans are very traditional.” This often gets a chuckle because Africans know they are very traditional. But I then say, “No, I’m wrong. Africans are very, very, very, very traditional.” This usually gets more than a chuckle. Doing things traditionally in Africa is the African way of life. Americans have a hard time understanding the intensity of tradition in the African setting because America is an ever changing culture.

Doing things traditionally is not wrong. In society, tradition adds stability. However, in African, as well as any culture, there can be a danger with tradition in reference to the growth of the church. The traditional way of doing something sometimes becomes the only way it can be done. And so, the churches often denominationalize into groups that do things as they have always been taught by a particular leader in the past. If a missionary taught an opinion or gave a method of work three decades ago, more than likely it is still being done today in the churches he established. This is fine if church growth is happening. But sometimes methods lose their effectiveness. When they do, we

must change to something that works. If a church is not willing to adapt to meet changing needs, it will usually digress to squabbles within itself when there are those who seek to grow by doing things differently.

Seminars, workshops and lectureships help keep the church from digressing into non-growth and traditionalism. In these meetings, members of various regions are presented with an occasion to see, hear and learn from others who do things in a different way. Leaders are challenged to go to their Bibles and check their beliefs. I am a firm believer in providing churches with the opportunity to come together in order to review all things we believe and do. I see seminars as an opportunity to challenge the thinking of those who attend. When they are challenged, they will study. The next step is to present an environment where men can freely study the word of God without being intimidated by those who would denominationalize the church.

Brethren who work in isolated areas away from opportunities must be challenged with new ideas. Those who work in isolated situations often come up with odd interpretations of the Bible and ineffective methods. For this reason Paul said that we must prove all things and hold fast to that which is true (2 Co 13:5). After all things have been put to the test with the word of God, then we can hold on to that which is true. If we do not continually test all things by the word of God, we will stagnate and die. This is especially true in an African setting where the traditionalism of the culture has a great impact on the nature of the church as to how it views both teachings and methods. Africans are not always the free thinkers as those of the business/industrial world. When a leader of an African church has a particular opinion, that opinion is usually unchallenged by the membership of the church, for many are first generation Christians who know little Bible. It is important, therefore, to put church leaders into situations where their beliefs can be challenged by their peers. And in such a situation everyone must be able to put a smile on his face and a finger on the passage.

Church leaders who organize area meetings of leaders need to understand the preceding point. The meetings must be organized in order to offer challenges to the things we believe. We must be forced to go to

our Bibles lest we digress to traditionalism, and thus, denominationalism. In a spirit of love, we must allow ourselves the opportunity to be challenged with the word of God.

Since the church has been in existence in several areas of Africa for almost one hundred years, the need for seminars for leaders is greater now than ever before. Those who conduct such seminars must be acquainted with the African culture. Importation of foreign ideas and methods need to be filtered through the minds of those who understand Africa.

One of the key subjects that must be taught are the letters to the Romans and Galatians. The truth of the gospel—God’s grace—is a principle of Scripture that must be taught far and wide on the continent. It is important to understand the grace of God in order that we not bind where God has not bound. The African church must continually be reminded of Paul’s exhortation to the Galatians, “*Stand fast therefore in the liberty by which Christ has made us free, and do not be entangled again with a yoke of bondage*” (Gal 5:1).

It was my observation from the five months of seminars in 1997 that there was a need for African experienced evangelists to do seminars throughout the continent. I believe such would greatly enhance the growth of the African church in any region. The infusion of new ideas, the encouragement of local brethren, and the cross pollination of spirit will cause the church to bring forth tremendous growth. I would suggest that sponsoring churches encourage their evangelists in Africa to travel across country or continent once a year in order to conduct a seminar in another culture. We must cross pollinate in order to be guarded against becoming sterile bred mutations of non-growth.

You will have to pardon my preaching. But if you are reading this book, you are in some way involved in Africa. And if you are involved in Africa, then you need to know some things about this continent and its needs. As a concerned disciple we must work together in order to increase the growth of the church in Africa.

### **Lilongwe, Malawi**

The older I get the more acquainted I become with four o’clock in

the morning. So there I was at the Namikango Mission staring at the ceiling, wondering if I should get up and get on with the trip. I did. So off in the night to Lilongwe, Malawi I headed for the next seminar.

It is only a short four-hour drive from Namikango to Lilongwe. The trip was fine except in those days one had to receive a Malawian Ph.D. on the way, that is, a Pothole Dodger degree.

The brethren in Lilongwe had arranged that I begin lectures the day I arrived, thus activities started at midday and carried through to about 9:30<sup>PM</sup>. I was tired that night.

There were over one hundred churches represented by those who attended. It was a great opportunity to be with the leaders of the church in the south central part of the country. The church was started in Lilongwe in 1957 by Doyle Gilliam. We met for the seminar in the old church building that had been constructed in 1958. There were many older brethren present at this seminar and it was a privilege to be among brethren who had been faithful for so many years. I must also say that the Malawi brethren have always been very hospitable. I have always been cared for well throughout Malawi.

### **Remnants Of The Past**

The colonial governments started leaving Africa in the '50s. They helped bring Africa out of the bushes, and in most cases gave it a kick-start into the modern world. Missionaries often led the way in this development by building schools and hospitals. Relief funds were sent to famine victims. Eye glasses were sent to those who had bad eyesight. Medicine was sent to the sick. Roads were built by colonial governments. Governments and courts were directed by the colonials and Africa was thus launched into the modern world by being hand fed, by being "taken care of," and injected with colonial education and support.

You know the rest of the story, that is, the effect the above "helping hand" had on African culture. What developed in many cases was a "foreign aid" culture that had its hand out to every foreigner who came by. Now that Africa is seeking to continue to develop, it is carrying with it a crippled thinking that keeps its hand cuffed for help. The

colonials have long since gone, but they have left a “foreign aid” thinking that will hinder much of Africa for years to come. The Africa that was left after the departure of the colonials was an Africa that was trained for a century and a half to look for help from outside. Africa went from a vertical to a horizontal handshake.

When I traveled to many places in Ethiopia on this trip there were always those who had their hands out, asking for some handout. I was with Behailu Abebe, whom I will talk about in a following chapter. Behailu said that the outstretched hands did not exist in Ethiopia before the famine of the early 1980s. When all the relief programs came into the country with all the free handouts, then the people learned to hold out their hands.

The Africa that was left after the departure of the colonials is an Africa that often feels she needs to be taken care of. This Africa often feels that it is the responsibility of the developed countries to care of her every need. But the aid no longer comes as it did. African countries first borrowed from the World Bank, and then repaid their loans in natural resources. Thus, many African countries have sold their countries to developed countries in order to reap some funds to fill the potholes and politicians' pockets.

The new colonialism is economic. One of the prime examples of this is a thirsty China roaming throughout the continent looking for natural resources. Because of her high GNP, China needs natural resources to continue her economic boom. So she has come to Africa. It is interesting to observe the ploy of China to the African. China says that there are no strings attached and no interest to become involved in Africa. All that is sought is a deal for natural resources. This political swooning by China appeals to an African politician who has little knowledge of history. China comes with a grant to build a soccer stadium in Liberia, a few dollars for a museum, or contribution to build a road. But when there is a drought or a genocide, she is not there. “Noninvolvement” means that we are not concerned for your pain. Whenever African countries are in trouble, they go to the West, not to the East. I have always thought that this is an interesting contradiction in the politics of both Africa and China.

The cuffed hand policy greatly affects the church. Churches in many areas believe that if any mission work is to be done, it is to be done by foreign workers, or at least, supported by foreign funds. Local preachers are often continually supported by foreign sources. Africa wants the money, but not the outside involvement or control. There are cases everywhere where a local preacher is living at home with his father and mother, brothers and sisters while living off a “pension” from some foreign church. He is supported to live at home by a foreign source that considers him to be their “missionary.” The local church stopped growing a decade or so ago, but the comfortable financial arrangement continues. Multiply this many times over and the “foreign aid” thinking is thus perpetuated throughout the continent.

Now that I have preached the preceding in the context of Africa, allow me an opportunity to redeem myself with my African readers. There are many African brethren who should be fully supported regardless of the source of the support. They are not of the cuffed hand mentality. In fact, they would be the first to warn foreign supporters to be very cautious about throwing money around in Africa. These worthy servants are wise workers in the kingdom, and thus deserve and need any support they can receive. They are men with whom I have worked for years and have really proven their worth. We are in an era of world mission that such men must be sought out and helped to evangelize the world. I would certainly encourage churches to internationally partner with those men who are truly worthy of support and evangelistic in their lives.

There are many African brethren who are gifted men that must be sought in order to evangelize this continent. Because these men are worthy of support, they are wise enough to realize the problems with such support. Those with whom I have been associated would rather be supporting themselves. These are sincere and very dedicated men. They know the risk of foreign support for their families. Each one would rather be a tentmaker to support himself because of the dubious nature of foreign support. I will come to their defense that they be supported, but I will also come to their defense that when they die, their wives must be guaranteed support until they join their husbands in death.

There have been too many cases where a wife has been left destitute when supporting churches pulled out when the husband died.

But I would suggest another aspect to the foreign support arrangement. If one is supported while he lives in his home town and around his extended family, he usually cannot reach his full potential as an evangelist. The reason for this is simple. When one has the responsibility of the church, as well as his extended family at home, it can become very difficult for the supported worker to focus on his mission. For some reason the apostles left family and friends. Jesus said that there are those who leave fathers and mothers and brothers and sisters and lands for the kingdom. He knew what he was saying in a culture where the responsibilities of the extended family were strong. In order to be a eunuch for the kingdom of God, however, one would have a hard time doing this when dealing with an extended family of twenty to thirty people. Foreign support of one member of the family only complicates the problem, since now the family feels that the supported individual is a financial pipeline to an unlimited source of funds. When supporting men in Africa, therefore, I would suggest that they be sent forth as missionaries. They should leave home and go into all the world. A good African brother biblically and culturally trained in Zambia can be a great missionary in Angola or the Congo. If he wants to do the work of an evangelist, then he must go out as an evangelist, not stay at home. And there are a lot of good men in Africa who want to do just this. But in order to do this, they need the partnership of foreign churches who can help them go into all the nations of Africa. They need your support.

### **Spontaneous Restorations**

It is quite refreshing to come upon those indigenous restoration efforts that have spontaneously generated out of a faith of one who seeks to proclaim Jesus. Unfortunately, many of these movements occur in areas where institutional missions have already been established. The small restoration movements begin in an indigenous manner, but after some time, they seek funds from the institutional groups in order to support their work. They need support to buy vehicles. They seek

funds to buy buildings, computers, cellphones, etc. They thus sell out to the highest bidder. Institutional churches are sometimes in competition to buy out such indigenous movements in order to claim the churches. They prey on the foreign aid mentality of Africa. I do not think this is what Paul meant when he wrote, “*Buying (Gr.) up the opportunity*” in Ephesians 5:16.

There are several examples of where foreigners have passed through with money to buy Balaams. A foreign group will often come to evangelize Africa by buying churches. Their system is somewhat different than preaching Jesus and Him crucified. They come trumpeting a pet opinion that is preached at their place of origin. They go from one church to another in order to save the saved by cloning others after their personal issues with promises of support for preachers and buildings, or whatever. Once one sells his independence to these recruiters, Balaamites are created, and thus a small group of disciples is stolen from the greater fellowship of churches in the country.

All of this explains why it has been difficult for “Africans to claim Africa.” When money is greatly sought in a Developing World economic environment, faith often succumbs to money. Africans claiming Africa is a goal to be sought. But as long any African church depends on outside financial security in order to accomplish the goal, it will never take ownership of the continent.

Is it impossible for Africa to claim its own territory for evangelization? Certainly not! There are enough examples of indigenous evangelism in Africa to show that it is being done in many areas, and is being done with great success. Many of the examples of indigenous religious movements in Africa come out of South Africa where there was little colonialism in the past. The Dutch and English settled in the region centuries ago, but their influence was far different than that of many past colonial countries of Africa. The Dutch (now the Afrikaners) and English fought for their right to settle in Africa. The Afrikaners fought for independence, first from the Dutch East Indies Company, and then, from the English. The black Africans fought back the settlers. Both cultures, black and white, therefore, developed an independent and aggressive culture. Sanctions during the 1980s forced South

Africa to do its own thing, provide its own development, invent for its own necessities. What has emerged from these centuries of conflict and struggle is a socio/economic culture that is very independent. Therefore, when we talk about the African foreign aid mentality, leave South Africa out of the discussion. South Africans have a great socio/economic self-esteem that will in the years to come continually develop the country into an economic power for the future. Once it gets over the legacy of the apartheid of the past, and past the first generation of new African politicians, great things will happen.

Among South African churches, therefore, indigenous church work and function is quite common. There has been a history of foreign supported located preachers in South Africa. This has crippled some works, but helped others. There is a struggling effort within the country to do its own thing because of an independent mentality. Lectureships and gospel meetings and workshops are all supported by South Africans. The 1997 annual African Lectureship was conducted in Johannesburg with over 3,500 present from five countries. The South African brethren supported the entire effort and do so every year. No one dreams of asking some foreign source for help. This was one of the great things about the spirit of the South African church at that time. It was heading into the future with a mentality of doing things on its own.

Everyone agrees that Africa must go on its own. If the continent is to be evangelized, indigenous efforts must spring up where African brethren set out on foot as Livingstone, Sheriff and Short in order to blaze trails to unevangelized areas. Of the over one thousand churches that were represented in two seminars I conducted in southern Malawi in '97, not one of the churches was giving any support to send out an evangelist to other areas in order to establish churches. However, the small and indigenous restoration of Salima was progressing on its own in its first two years of growth. What Salima was doing was of his own ingenuity, separate from the influence of missionaries and foreign intervention and leadership. I wondered if someone would eventually come by and buy out Salima by buying him a bicycle, or building a church building, or whatever. When I left Salima, I said to him, "Do

not let Balaam be sold.” This twenty-five year old responded, “You mean like when some foreign mission group starts supporting you they start telling you what to do?” Very perceptive, don’t you think?

Many of the churches that were represented in the two southern Malawi seminars have a challenge. Is it too late for them to start working together in order to send out evangelists? I wondered if they were too established in the foreign aid thinking to think that they could also send and do what they have not done in supporting evangelists throughout Africa. It is not that they need to send someone across the continent. They just needed to send someone to the next village, and then to another, or just across the border into Mozambique.

Many Malawian preachers have gone on their own to start churches throughout the country. They have gone without receiving any support from the churches of Malawi. It is a credit to these preachers who have supported themselves in order to preach the gospel. However, in many cases, there were “full-time” preachers in Malawi, but they were on the “foreign aid” system, being supported with foreign support. The foreign support has often stolen from the African church the opportunity to support their own preachers. And after all, why should they if some foreign aid country will do the work for them?

McOnly proves the point that the African can do mission work. When I was in Ethiopia on the ‘97 trip, one brother during a seminar stood up and said, “We must repent. We just sent out two men to start the church in a neighboring village, but we went to the foreign mission to ask for the funds to send them out. We repent.” So there is hope as the African church realizes that past mistakes must not be repeated in a new movement toward African evangelism. Many African leaders have grown to the point of realizing the negative impact the foreign aid mentality has had on the church. But keep in mind that there are countless African brethren out there doing the work. They are going from village to village preaching Jesus, and immersing thousands into Christ. They are doing this of their own self-initiative. These are the men who are taking Jesus to the continent. These will be the brethren who will evangelize Africa.

## Chapter 17

### NORTHERN HOSPITALITY

There are two frustrating things about conducting African leadership seminars. First, they are never long enough. At least in my case the longest seminar has been ten days in length. Out of necessity, however, they are usually two to three days. Why seminars seemed short may be that I had too much to say. Then again, one is always encouraged to continue on for those who are hungering and thirsting after Bible study. I have found that throughout Africa among preachers and teachers there was an unquenchable thirst for the word of God. Africa has not lost her desire for the word of God.

One reason why seminars had to be short was because of the financial burden they put on the shoulders of the local church hosting the event. It is not good to provide any outside financial assistance for conducting a seminar. One purpose of the seminar is to provide the occasion for leadership responsibility. By providing outside financial maintenance of the seminar, all of us who are participating in the seminar are actually defeating the purpose for the seminar. When local brethren feel that they have carried out the total responsibility of a seminar, leadership is trained. I have found that when brethren understand that there is no source for outside support for a seminar, they do just fine in providing all that is necessary. I think this is one of the beautiful things about African culture in general. African brothers and sisters are very hospitable. Though a seminar places an extra burden on a single group of disciples, when churches in a region get together, you would be amazed as to how great a seminar is organized. And food, look out. Church brethren are the same all over the world. We really know how to fellowship around a good pot of food.

A second frustration about doing seminars is that everyone wants a seminar. Brethren have requested seminars from everywhere in Africa. For example, when I planned the 1997 seminar trip, I had planned rest time in the schedule. But during the months of travel, I had filled in all the free time, and still turned down at least five or six other semi-

nars. This does prove one point I want to emphasize. There is the need for experienced African evangelists to do international seminars throughout the continent. There are some very qualified brethren in the church in Africa who can and are doing some great work in conducting seminars. These brethren need to be encouraged to continue such meetings. They are actually better in conducting seminars simply because they know the local customs better than someone coming from a foreign country.

One of the great missionaries of Africa, Sam Shewmaker, for several years did a great job of conducting seminars. He and Nancy traveled throughout the continent conducting leadership seminars. They were just the type of people to do such. Both know African thinking. Sam grew up in Zambia, and thus knew how to apply the material to the thinking of the African mind. Better yet, he knew what material needed to be taught. I have found from my own experience, as well as what I have observed from preachers coming fresh over from Latin America and America, that there is a great gulf between the culture of the West and the rural Developing World thinking of Africa. I would be so bold as to state that there are some areas where the Western church is very limited in how it can help the African church. I have worked in seminars in Africa for over four decades, conducting about twenty-five to thirty a year during the '90s. And still, I feel inadequate in applying the concepts of a biblical world view to some African cultures. In some situations there is such a great gulf of thinking between the West and Africa that I feel I have not communicated concepts correctly.

The African and Westerner have a hard time meeting together on world view concepts. The West is geared toward the mind. The African is geared toward the emotional and spiritual part of man. The West says two plus two equals four. The African says four equals two plus two, maybe. It is not a matter of intelligence. It is just the angle from which one views the equation. The African lines the church up to eat down one side of the food table in order to dish out food, if indeed there is a line at all, or even a table. The Western forms a line on both sides of the table. The West meets at ten 'til the hour. The African meets an hour later. An African can preach for an hour from one scripture. The

Western preacher can hardly get twenty-five minutes from a host of passages. The West has a three-point outline. The African wonders what an outline is. The Westerner preaches an analytical lesson. The African tells a story. The West is restless after twenty minutes of preaching, whereas the African has just concluded the introduction. I think you get the point. There is a great difference between the two cultures. I am sure that Americans become somewhat frustrated with the rural African way. But this does not say that one's way is the right way. The rural African way is often the better way for his situation. All this makes teaching seminars exciting and challenging in Africa. I never cease to learn something new from my African brethren.

### **Out Of Lilongwe**

In '97 I closed out the Lilongwe seminar on a Monday morning. I had lectured thirteen times in two days. Almost all the churches of the Lilongwe region of the country were represented. It had been three years since I had been in the country and did not know when I would be back in Lilongwe as I hit fifth gear headed north to Mzuzu. It is almost hard to leave good brethren with whom one has established a relationship through a seminar. When leaving a seminar, I always felt that there was much that I should have said. Nevertheless, seminars have to come to a close and one has to move on. So move on I did.

I am always a little frustrated in some seminars by learning how much must be taught. It is often frustrating to see areas of study you feel that brethren should have grown in for the past twenty to forty years. In some situations, intellectual growth in the knowledge of the Scriptures seems to have plateaued. So much emphasis has been placed on first principles that no one has challenged the churches to think beyond Acts 2:38. Churches have often become so assembly oriented that the members have contented themselves with "faithful" attendance while allowing ignorance of the Scriptures beyond first principles to prevail. There is always a need for revival for Bible study in churches. One of the challenges of the evangelist is to continually challenge the church to study the Scriptures.

I must say one thing, however, about the maturity of the Lilongwe

brethren. When I left, several of the brethren came personally to me and gave me money for petrol to get to the next seminar. This manifested great maturity on their part. I had this happen several times on my way up through and back from eastern Africa in '97. Some of our African brethren have come a long way in growth on this matter.

### **Mzuzu, Malawi**

The Mzuzu Bible School was not on my original schedule of seminars on the '97 trip. Neither was a meeting with the Central church in Mzuzu. But how can one turn away from the pleas of some good brethren who plead that you come and teach? So it was off to Mzuzu from Lilongwe I went.

I had lectured in Lilongwe on Monday morning from 7:00<sup>AM</sup> to 9:00<sup>AM</sup>. I jumped into the Nissan and headed straight for Mzuzu, about a five-hour drive away. I arrived in time to start lectures at the Mzuzu Bible School at 3:00<sup>PM</sup>. I really don't think I was too thrifty during those lectures. It was a hard day, but God somehow provided the strength I needed.

Driving up through northern Malawi, however, is a trip through nature. It is a relaxing trip. Over fifty years ago the British government planted the largest man-made forest in the world in this region. Over 4,500 acres of pine trees were planted for the purpose of making paper. The paper manufacturing business never become a reality, but the country has been left with a beautiful area of forest that is pleasant to experience. It is as driving through the southeastern part of America. One is driving at about four to five thousand feet, so it is cool and refreshing. You would enjoy the area.

One of the "reliefs" that I had during the months of travel in '97 was the opportunity to drive by myself between seminars. This was my time alone, a time to meditate. It was time to relax and enjoy the surroundings. If it were not for these times alone, it would have been most difficult to keep a somewhat balanced state of mind from one seminar right after another since the seminars were very intense. I always looked forward to climbing into the Nissan and watching the world go by down some road of Africa. I do not mind driving alone. It is my time to think

and meditate on kingdom matters. I have had some very tear-drawing worship periods while driving down the road alone in Africa.

### **Mzuzu Bible School**

James Judd built a most organized and practical facility just north of Mzuzu in the late '80s. The Mzuzu Bible School had been in existence since 1989 and was doing a fine job in training church leaders. There were six teachers of the school when I was there in '97. They were all Malawian brethren and were well qualified for their work. There were forty-one students in classes at the time. They were trying to keep their enrollment under fifty, though at one time they had sixty enrolled.

Brother Judd had not yet returned from America when I was present. He had been working in and with Malawi since the 1960s. The Mzuzu Bible School was one of his dreams that had come to reality as a result of some hard years of construction and organization. This is one of those works that had a great impact on the church in northern Malawi. In fact, there was a student from Mozambique and one from Tanzania enrolled when I was present. The influence of the school grew to impact Mozambique to the east and west and Tanzania to the north.

While at Mzuzu, the Central church wanted me to lecture three hours a day for three days in the city of Mzuzu. During the mornings, therefore, I went to Mzuzu. It was good to be with the elders of the church in Mzuzu. They were godly men and very concerned about the outreach of the church.

I was impressed with the campus evangelistic outreach that this church was doing among secondary schools (high schools) in their region. They had a team of young members who went to the secondary schools to provide Bible study literature and organize students into functioning Bible study groups. When I arrived, they had over six hundred students enrolled in several different secondary schools in different towns and cities in the northern area of Malawi. This was certainly encouraging.

In the area of Bible classes and prayer groups in public schools, many of the sub-Saharan African countries are years ahead of America.

America went backward in this area. Africa has come from backward to forward, for religious education is often a part of the school curriculum. This offers a tremendous opportunity for laying ground work for present and future evangelization of cultures. These efforts to teach Bible in public schools are preparing the soil for the future growth of the church.

One of the reasons I wrote the *Adventures in Life* course was to offer to African schools a course on morals, family and leadership. Since it was first published in the late '90s, this course has been distributed throughout hundreds of secondary schools in Africa. Thousands of students have studied through the course in public schools. American churches helped in printing this course, while the African brethren did the work of teaching it. The Central church in Mzuzu was doing this work on their own. The workers supported themselves. They also had an outreach in Lilongwe the capital that was five hours to the south. They were doing a great work.

### **The Lubagha Mission**

In the late '50s a portion of land was designated and given to the church in northern Malawi. That was the beginning of the Lubagha Mission which continues unto this day in what is called the Henga Valley. The John Thiessens worked with the mission for over twenty-five years. Bob and Flo Caulderwood were in '97 continuing the work and doing a faithful job with the training of preachers in the area. They conducted week-long seminars for the preachers and church leaders. In those years, there were from seven to ten of these seminars conducted every year at the Lubagha Mission. Bob started a very effective extension seminar program which took the seminars to other areas. At Lubagha, the teachers would first go through the courses that would be taught in the extension seminars. The teachers would in turn go to other regions and teach the material to local churches. Their extension work was a very effective program. By 2004 Bob had established the Lubagha Bible Institute with the *Biblical Research Library Curriculum*, and thus had taken the Lubagha Mission to another level of impact in northern Malawi.

My teaching at the mission on the '97 trip was not in my planned program. Nevertheless, I had first come to Lubagha in the days when John and Ann Thiessen were there in 1988 and could not pass up an opportunity to go there when in the country. It had been three years since I was there. Since Bob said the preachers were coming in and they expected me to be there, I had to divert to Lubagha for an unexpected seminar. So I squeezed in some time I intended to spend in Nairobi. I changed plans to be at Lubagha for three days, and then, made a mad rush across Tanzania for Nairobi, and then on to Malindi, Kenya. I needed to be in Nairobi in order to have my Ethiopian visa renewed by Friday in order to leave for Malindi, which was seven hours from Nairobi.

If I had a choice of living in Malawi, I suppose it would be in the northern part of the country. There is something about the people and the tranquility of the northern region that has always appealed to me. It is not like the heavily populated south. The culture of the people of the north lends itself to friendliness and great self-sufficiency. I suppose my rural yearnings come to the surface in the region. Or possibly, it is because I have spent so many isolated weeks at the Lubagha Mission throughout the years that my primal yearnings feel at home there. The environment is so different from the city culture in which we farmer types have been trapped. Our rural nature explodes with rural reacculturation when we get to the country.

Living in isolated points as Lubagha is not easy. Folks like Bob and Flo should be highly commended for their work in such areas. In those days, there was no electricity and many conveniences that we think are necessary for the existence of human beings. It was in the days of lanterns and candles. I suppose such adds to the atmosphere when you get used to it. However, most Western residents would probably have a very difficult time with such living. Most of us are so far removed from our rural cultural heritage that it terrifies us to think of going back to the old days. When one steps into rural Africa, usually he or she steps into a time machine whose batteries have long since run down in the last century.

One of the mystiques of Africa is that in some rural settings it

never seems to change. Millions of people still live in huts that are built the same way they were a thousand years ago. Many now clad themselves in western clothes, but the culture and life-style seem to carry on unchanged. In fact, some countries as the Democratic Republic of Congo (old Zaire) and Zimbabwe have gone backward in history since they became independent three decades ago. Such digression has led to a fatalistic world view that somewhat stymies hope for the future. At least, it is difficult for the typical rural African to make long-range plans for the future. However, such also provides the rural African the mental tools to deal with his present predicament. A truly ambitious rural African would be somewhat unsettled in a society where nothing changes. The rural African is seated in a cultural and economic climate that often does not get better. In many cases, dictatorial and selfish government officials have moved a few countries back into the early twentieth century. The local rural resident is often helplessly stuck in a situation that does not have much promise for a better future. Therefore, who can blame the rural African who has resolved himself to his plight.

On the other hand, the urban African is in a different situation. Over half of Africa now lives in cities. The educated urbanite is on his way into a new future, one that offers promise for the continent as a whole. Many of the large cities of Africa are developing. The urban African will take the continent into a better future as his leadership filters down to the rural communities. It will take time, but the prospects look great. I would urge the West, therefore, not to give up on Africa.

There is an educated and wealthy class of Africans in the city who are moving toward the future. They are an economic class that is far away from their rural settings. This is the Latin American economic syndrome. The rich get richer and the poor get poorer. So when we talk about economic growth in Africa, keep in mind that much of this growth does not affect the rural African. He is still out there with his pick and shovel trying to carve out survival in a hostile environment that often goes wrong.

Malawi is one of those countries that seems to have momentarily

stagnated in the '90s. During the days of Banda, the former "president for life," the country and economy idled along. At least it was not in regression. However, after the elections in 1994, the potholes in the roads became larger. (We in Africa measure the economy by the number and size of potholes in roads.) The economy was at a standstill, being plagued by the usual corruption that seems to be a way of life among politicians. But again, this will sort itself out in the future. I am an incurable optimist. Of course my optimism was crushed by the Zimbabwean story, but generally, Zimbabwe is now the exception as Africa is getting its act together for the future.

The government of Malawi in the late '90s had become consumed with the typical think-of-themselves politicians who had little concern for the people. When I was there, the teachers went on strike because they had not been paid for two months. The government said they had no money to pay them. However, the government announced that they were going to upgrade all their fleet of Mercedes Benz vehicles for government officials for several million dollars. That was the straw that broke the camel's back, so the teachers went on strike, the first strikes in in the country for thirty years. Strikes are so un-Malawian, which exemplified the frustration of the people with a government which they had hoped would better their lives after the days of Banda. Well, welcome to African politics. TIA.

I asked someone, "Why do they not repair the roads?" The reply was that they are waiting until the year of the election." I asked, "Will you elect the government back into power." Answer, "Probably will." When the new roads appear there is the typical African forgiveness and forgetfulness of the past, and we carry on. Welcome to Africa.

Now to be fair, Malawi is a poor country, except if we want to buy our new fleet of Mercedes cars. There are few natural resources in the country. And what resources there are, the rest of the world does not want to pay the transport costs to ship them out of this landlocked country. The industrial world would just as well buy straight from a port in South Africa. Most of the population of Malawi has little use for good roads, since the greater percentage of the population scurries about on foot or bicycles. Only the urbanite businessmen fly down the roads

dodging potholes. However, the development of any country is dependent on the development of its infrastructure. And good roads get products to the consumer.

But here is Malawi. Trapped in a time machine that did not have Duracell batteries, and thus is stuck this side of the nineteenth century. One cannot but feel sorry for the rural people when considering their economic plight. But this is as far as our concern for the country would go. When it comes to spirituality, they have bypassed the business/industrial world like a whirlwind. The spiritual growth of the people is very encouraging. There are no potholes on the road to spiritual growth in Malawi.

My philosophy of receptivity is still affirmed by the Malawian situation. Poverty and bad government in a rural-oriented population lends itself to spiritual prosperity. In a rural setting one keeps the soul close to nature and not depersonalized by the complexity of urban life. Poverty keeps one's mind off a concern for the riches of life. Bad government makes one realize that government cannot make life better. We must trust in God, not government. And so, much of Africa is receptive to the gospel for much of Africa is poor, rural, and cursed with bad government. I know that heaven will be full of Africans. This is one thing for which we can praise God. And this is one reason why the African spiritual situation is healthy when considering the spiritual situation of the continent. Great things are happening in Africa. The best is yet to be.

## **Chapter 18**

### **NORTH TO TANZANIA AND KENYA**

As I drove out of Malawi, I could not but be encouraged by the state of the church in Malawi. Malawian leaders were preaching the gospel everywhere. Over seven thousand had been baptized in the northern part of the country in the year previous to 1997. Scores of new churches are started every year in the country. Though the churches have their struggles, the growth of the church continues throughout the country. This country has been very fruitful, and in the future, there

seems to be no end in sight for growth. God's name is being praised by the dedication of some great Malawian brethren.

By the time I left Malawi on the '97 trip. I had been on the road five and a half weeks. I had departed Cape Town the first part of April. It was May 20<sup>th</sup> when I pulled out of the Lubagha Mission and headed for Tanzania. I had conducted eleven seminars and meetings, and completed a series of lectures at the ACA Conference. I was not at the point of wondering if this would ever end, but thanked God that I was still in good health. One of my only worries was getting some kind of African plague, and thus, not being able to show up for a week or so at some scheduled seminar where brethren had walked for great distances to attend. But God was gracious throughout the trip, though some struggles would come later.

I had originally intended to leave the Lubagha Mission at 4:30<sup>AM</sup>, but I kept waking up, first at 1:00<sup>AM</sup>, then at 2:00<sup>AM</sup>. I finally gave in and headed out at 3:30<sup>AM</sup>. I was in the dark for an hour and a half, then the sun began to peek over the horizon and cast its orange blanket across the waters of Lake Malawi. It was a beautiful sight, although about this time the roads deteriorated to an assortment of potholes one after another. However, the roads were not as bad as I had experienced in southern Malawi and not as bad as what I was yet to experience.

## Tanzania

This was my first visit to the beautiful country of Tanzania. Coming from the arid southern countries of Africa, the very southwestern part of the country looked exceptionally green and great. The hills rolled with green across the vastness of a beautiful landscape. The first one hundred miles reminded me of the Caribbean. There were banana trees everywhere. The vegetation was lush on the mountain sides. As I drove up and down the valleys and mountains, my mind went back to those Caribbean days when we first started the Bible institute on the island of Antigua and flew to the rest of the islands from there. The southwestern part of Tanzania was an island paradise that was captured on a continent.

After passing through the mountains from the Malawian border to

the city of Mbeya, I headed east down the escarpment toward Morogoro. After about two hundred miles it was like driving in Mississippi and Alabama. Pine trees lined the road as I meandered through forest areas. I even passed a bayou and remembered the humidity of Louisiana. So much for good memories.

I was hastening to get through Tanzania to Nairobi, Kenya. I had to renew my visa for Ethiopia in Nairobi which had expired a week before. So this was a scurry trip, with little time for this and that along the way. After all, I would pass this way again. But as it turned out later, I had to scurry again back through the country in order to conduct another seminar in Uganda.

Except for one petrol stop, I drove nonstop for thirteen hours. About fifty miles west of Morogoro, I began wondering where I would find a place to stay in Morogoro for the night. There was a Baptist Guest House somewhere in the city, but I had no idea where. I was thus contemplating a decision on where to stay for the night somewhere in the bush. I really did not cherish the idea of wondering around Morogoro in the middle of the night, trying to find some place to stay. So, in the middle of nowhere I heard the call of the wild. I saw this forgotten trail leading off the main road. It was an unused trail—one has to learn how to pick those areas in Africa where no one will be, if ever such a thing exists in Africa. In Africa it can be quite a challenge to find a place where there are no local residents. So there I went through the bushes to somewhere. I had just come out of the Mikumi National Park and there were no villages or people in sight. It was a good area for a possible hide away for the night.

After driving about half mile into the bush, I shut off the engine and bathed myself in the quietness of the bush surroundings. This was a most tranquil spot, Africa at its best. I had the sense of no one for miles around. This is unusual for Africa. The only trying part of the location was the host of ants of various sizes and colors that scurried everywhere on the ground. Ants usually go to sleep in their cozy holes at night, so they are usually no problem. Nevertheless, I christened this spot Ant Bush Camp. You can find it about fifty miles west of Morogoro. Go until you see no one for miles, take a right at the third bush, then up

what looks like a river bed. Cut back the bush and you will have a great spot to enjoy God's canopy of stars in the midst of a tranquil African night.

It was a full moon as I tweaked out the light. I was serenaded to bed by the African choir of assorted night creatures. It was great. You should have been there. Manuel de Oliveira once said to me, "Dickson, you were born a hundred years too late." Maybe so.

I almost had an unfortunate loss on this trip from Malawi to the Ant Bush Camp. I had filled my empty large water container in Lubagha and placed it in the back of the Nissan. You guessed it. Somehow it developed a small leak and unloaded about a gallon of water on the floor of the bed. The boxes of books in the bed were packed in cardboard boxes, which fortunately absorbed most of the water. Some of the books on the bottom were damp, so I took everything out of the boxes for the night and let the boxes and books dry out. In the morning they were pretty dry, so back into the boxes and on the road I went.

Since I grew up on a farm in central Kansas, the African bush always intrigued me. I was not as an urbanite who shuddered at the thought of being in the bush. I once wrote in *African Missionary Pilot* the following concerning some of my adventures among the people and environment of the African bush:

Africa is different everywhere. You can never stereotype this continent. Its majestic mixture of peoples and cultures and economies boggles the Western mind where everything is relatively the same. There are over 3,000 languages and dialects on the continent of Africa. That gives one some idea of its diversity. I was working in areas at the time in which at least twenty different languages were spoken. Would that God had allowed the gift of languages to continue throughout history.

Traveling in Africa, therefore, can be a very exciting cultural adventure. If one wants something new, it is just over the next hill or around the next cloud. If you want first world comfort, then to that you can go in Africa's metropolitan cities as Cairo, Nairobi and Johannesburg. If you want to go to the bush you can chance the bugs and beasts. This is the area where Westerners have a hard time surviving. Americans like to live

in the rough but they do not like rough in their living. American's travel to the bush is often limited to the terrain where one can drive a large caravan camping trailer.

### **African Bugs And Things**

Sometimes bush travel is the pits. You can be bombarded with these pests that are called bugs. They're everywhere. They buzz. They bite. They tickle and make funny noises.

Eating in the bush in the African evening could be most pleasant. But often there are those unpleasant places where uninvited flying ants (actually, termites) wing themselves in as irritant guests. They flutter around your face, flopping in the porridge and stuff. Harmless. But the next day these flying ants have shed their wings and are just like other ants on the ground. But again, I was once in Mutare, Zimbabwe and the ants were so bad that you could not stand still lest you have them crawling up your pant leg, tickling and itching and irritating. In Rumphi, Malawi I fought ants for two weeks in my living quarters. They ate into my special home-made cookies. That meant war. But you never declare war with ants. You never win.

And snakes? They say you cannot outrun a black or green mamba. That was always encouraging. Just as I jumped off an ant hill, I might step on some mamba. They also say to start counting backward from thirty when you are bitten by a mamba. You'll never make it to one. I don't know if this is true. I haven't talked to anyone who has been bitten by a mamba to verify the fact. Maybe it is one of those things one never lives to tell. The venom attacks the nervous system, as if I would be all that calm at the moment. Your lungs stop functioning and you simply suffocate.

So you stand still. Mistake. Mosquitos! And not just mosquitos. These blessed pests carry every variation of malaria one would like to not mention. First thing I do when I get to heaven is ask Noah why he did not slap just once. And then, make sure he got the pregnant one. The early European missionaries in the 1800s died by scores from malaria. It is said that so many died that they called Africa the white man's coffin. European missionaries often packed their belongings in their coffins when they moved to Africa.

I was out there in the bush and saw this spider that was as big as my hand. At the time I knew he was big enough to shake hands. Africa is the land of spiders. Most are harmless. But again, there are those whom God has blessed with the ability of great self-preservation.

After I awoke one morning and looked under my bed roll, sure enough, there was a host of creepy crawlers camped under my bedding enjoying the human warmth in the cool African night. There was a round one, a long one, and a flat one where I slept on my elbow. I suppose I will have to learn to live with them all. Should a big man as I flee from such small pests as they? I guess not as long as I can slap, scratch and scat.

### **Opportunity In A Nation**

Tanzania. At the time I was there on the 97 trip, there are not many churches in this third poorest country in Africa. Many of the churches were in the southwest, with a few also in the east around Dar es Salaam. I was told that there were about fifty churches in the southwest in the Chimala Mission area that was first started in the early 1960s. There were five or six around Dar es Salaam and about five or six scattered here and there throughout the country.

The exciting thing about the Tanzania work was a new mission outreach by the missionaries in Mwanza at the southern end of Lake Victoria. They established about seventy churches in the first four years of their work. Such was an indication of the great receptivity that was in Tanzania at the time. The Mwanza work seemed to be a new beginning and one that indicated great things that were yet to come for the country.

One fact I did learn from the eastern side of the country was that English was widely spoken. As in most African countries, it was taught in the schools throughout the country. I would see this as a great opportunity for Bible correspondence course outreach. Here is a country where post office boxes could be stuffed in key cities with the possibility of contacting independent church leaders who are already functioning with organized churches. These leaders can be taken on to a greater knowledge of the Scriptures through a Bible correspondence course program.

There are thousands of African independent churches on the continent of Africa. They have a little Bible and a little African religion of past years. Nevertheless, these independent churches are out there with some leaders who are often struggling to know the Bible better. Those who are sincere and love God's word, respond to Bible correspondence course programs. Many of those who have completed all these programs have been recommended to the Institute for continued studies. We have thus enrolled some great men in the Institute who are leading indigenous efforts in Africa to restore New Testament Christianity. I met one former religious leader in a seminar in Kisumu, Kenya. He said he was once of a religious group with which he and the entire group were not teaching or believing the right things about the Bible. He said that in 1995 they all changed to bring their beliefs to conform to the authority of the Bible. All of this came through correspondence courses. With the Institute, we experienced numerous examples of conversions as this in those days. It is for this reason that I believe that we should use every mass media effort to get the truth of the gospel to all the world. We must use every means to contact those who are searching through the maze of religious confusion in order to come to a greater knowledge of God's word.

### **On Tanzanian Roads**

I woke up at 2:45<sup>AM</sup> at Ant Bush Camp. I was as bright eyed as could be and there was no use begging for more sleep. I guess old age does this to you.

Two granola bars and some oats with instant cappuccino made my morning. It was 3:30<sup>AM</sup> when I pulled out of the bush and onto the tarmac headed as far north as I could get for the day. I had never been this way before, so I thought I would get as far north as Arusha, Tanzania and find a campsite. So I started driving. I drove and kept on driving. The road going north out of Chalinze was excellent. I was toasting along about 70<sup>MPH</sup> and these buses kept passing me. I thought as they passed me that these people drive like South Africans.

I must have had the "drives" for the day. I went up through the city of Makata, then Same, then Moshi, and finally to Arusha. After six

nonstop hours I did refuel in Arusha. Since it was early afternoon, I headed north toward the Kenyan border. The road north out of Arusha to Kenya was a small insignificant road. One would think that this would have been a main corridor road connecting these two countries. On the contrary, it was a small, narrow road through the middle of some great territory, but not as one would expect for a road that linked two nations. I must say, however, that they were surveying the road in order to construct another for the future.

I arrived at the border between Tanzania and Kenya around 3:00 that afternoon. I did my hour of border nonsense and kept on driving north to Nairobi. I pulled into Nairobi at about 5:00<sup>PM</sup>. From my last visit to Nairobi, the only place I remembered to go to was the Rainbow church building. So I went there to see who might be around this time of the evening. Everyone I knew in Nairobi was either gone or I did not know where they lived. God answered my prayers, however, for someone was at the building who allowed me to make a phone call. I contacted Bill Searcy and made plans to meet him across town at the Village Market. I made it to the Market, ate seeds and waited. About an hour later, Bill showed up while I was contemplating Plan B for the night. I had just completed a fourteen hour day of travel and was yearning for a bed. I must say that Nairobi is not a place to arrive after a fourteen hour journey on the road.

When Bill arrived, he was as an angel of God sent to deliver a lonely sojourner. Bill and his three children, Joshua, Dabraham and Esther, were great hosts. It was good to be with them again. They had visited us in Cape Town two years before, and it was good to be in their company again. The kids were a lot of fun. As I laid my head down that night, I was so very thankful that the Lord had delivered a tired sojourner from the road and placed him in a soft bed for the night. It sure beat the bush; I guess.

### **First Experiences In Kenya**

As I drove into Kenya I remembered my first experiences with this country. I have a lot of sweet memories of my initial trip to this country in 1993. In *African Missionary Pilot* I once wrote,

At 10:00<sup>PM</sup> they shuffled the last few passengers on South African Airways Flight 926 out of Cape Town to Johannesburg. I was on this flight destined for a quick trip to and through Kenya for seminars before leaving on a two month series of ten meetings and seminars in five countries.

At 12:00 midnight in Johannesburg, we weary passengers made land and huddled like claustrophobic cows off our flight. It was comforting to be received by missionary Rex Dutton who hurried me to the nearest bed where we crashed. Next morning it was to the only FAA registered medical examiner I knew existed in South Africa who could sign off my flight medical as an American registered pilot. I visited South African Bible School, made plans for the future, and then again headed for a 7:30<sup>PM</sup> flight that evening for Nairobi.

I finally landed in bed in Nairobi that night at 1:30<sup>AM</sup> at the house of missionary Ken Bolden. On Sunday morning Ken and I visited five churches—I think, I forgot after three. Sunday evening it was a 5-hour African road trip to Sotik where we stayed with missionaries David and Brenda Vick.

Monday and Tuesday was a two-day seminar for area churches around Sotik. Though not all were represented, there were about 145 churches in the area at the time. God had blessed the labors of faithful missionaries who planted the church in this area in the early 1970s.

On Tuesday afternoon missionary David High came to fetch me in Sotik in order to haul my tired bones to Kisii. On Wednesday we made for the bush again through and over roads which were really never meant to be called roads in the first place. And then, we left the “roads.” I’m sure I am a few inches shorter. My body was compacted by a four-wheel drive vehicle’s battle with angry Kenya trails. The Kenya bush missionaries must certainly be commended for their endurance. At the time some of them had been faithfully working for years in such conditions.

I conducted an introductory session for their Bible school and fellowshiped with church leaders in the area of Kisii on Thursday. Friday morning I was shuffled to another area in western Kenya, near to the edge of Lake Victoria. Again, I gave an introductory session for their school and delivered leadership lessons for eager church leaders in the area. The

sun had lazily set over the western horizon as David and I bounced into Kisii on our return trip. We had a special Asian barbecue meal that night with Kisii businessmen and two visiting doctors from India. My head finally fell dead on a pillow at 12:30<sup>AM</sup>.

On Saturday it was out of the bush and back to Nairobi. We ended the six hour trip at the house of Ken Bolden which would be my dwelling for the next several days.

Sunday morning I had the privilege of preaching for the Rainbow church that missionary Jim Reppart started in the early 1980s. I then had a meeting with the director and staff of the Great Commission School on Monday morning. Plans were made for them to use some of our distance training courses as credit in their developing distance training program. On Monday afternoon I began a series of lessons on 1,2 Timothy and Titus for the Great Commission School. These lessons were concluded Thursday night. By this time I began feeling the pace of this trip.

Friday morning was a breakfast with missionaries. Plans were made for a return trip in April 1994 for a stay of four to five weeks in order to expand the locations of teaching. Ken hauled by bones back to the airport where I boarded Flight OA105 for Johannesburg, arriving at 5:00<sup>PM</sup>. Patrick Kenee, and World Bible School worker, John Reese, met me at the airport. We talked all evening until they took me back to the airport at 12:30<sup>AM</sup> for my flight back to Cape Town. I arrived in Cape Town at 3:30<sup>AM</sup>. I slept in to 9:00<sup>AM</sup>. That morning Martha, Lisa and I began putting things together for our two-month Seminar Safari up through the length of South Africa, Zimbabwe, Malawi, Zambia and Botswana. We would leave June 30<sup>th</sup> and return to Cape Town September 1<sup>st</sup>. I would teach seminars, meetings while Martha taught ladies' classes. We had an exciting schedule which would open many doors for the Institute. God was working mightily in our lives.

### **Nairobi, Kenya**

Doing African seminar safari trips can sometimes be quite challenging. When I arrived in Nairobi on the '97 trip, I was again up and going. I had to do a host of things in order to hurry on to the next appointment in two days in Malindi on the coast. First thing in the

morning, therefore, I was off to the bank to acquire the local Kenya shillings. I then scurried over to the Ethiopian Consulate in order to renew my expired visa into Ethiopia. The Ethiopians extracted another seventy dollars out of me, and said come back tomorrow. Good enough.

Through all the African roads, I had totally wasted the back shocks of the Nissan. I had bounced here and there for the last one thousand miles, and thus, set out in Nairobi to find a pair of heavy duty shocks that would fit the South African made vehicle I was driving. No chance. I found a flimsy pair of “No Name” brand shocks and installed them right on the streets in downtown Nairobi. They did make things a lot better, but I wondered how long they would last. They cost a good thirty dollars each, but when you are desperate, money means little.

I was back to the bank for more cash. It was then to Bill’s house to unload some of the weight I was carrying around in the boxes of literature. The next two legs of my trek would take me on a seven to eight hour trip to Malindi, back to Nairobi, and then on a three-day trip to Ethiopia. I had not received any good information about the road from Isiolo, Kenya to the border town of Moyale on the way to Ethiopia. The rainy season had just ended, and the roads were reported to be in a post rainy season condition, which in Africa was not good. So I had this unknown territory to worry about for a few days while in Malindi.

And speaking of roads, in those days one had to feel sorry for the city of Nairobi because of the condition of some of the city streets. One would think that the capital city of Kenya would have had decent streets. But not so in those days. I suppose the backward political mentality of some African planners is revealed most in the roads of a country. There seems to be an innate urge on the part of some African politicians to send their countries back to the bush. The more I drove around in Nairobi, the more I appreciated the missionaries working there. And, the more I wanted to head for the bush. I had to chuckle, however, when I was driving down one of Nairobi’s pothole ridden roads and saw the city constructing two speed bumps on the road in order to slow the traffic.

I suppose I am quite spoiled by the excellent roads of South Africa. One has to look hard for a pothole in South Africa. South Afri-

cans are continually repairing the roads and building new roads. Most African countries have a road, not roads, to maintain and they cannot keep the potholes out of their road. I often ponder the political hypocrisy that went on for years as other African countries blasted South Africa because of their apartheid policies, while at the same time South Africa was developing under international sanctions. While other African countries were on the bandwagon to castigate South Africa, the dictatorial governments of those countries were sending their people back to the nineteenth century. Do I sound a little proud here about South Africa? I suppose so.

### **Malindi, Kenya**

My first impressions of Malindi, Kenya were reminders of how hot and humid we had been while living in the south of the United States. In 1994 Martha and I had visited several places in Kenya. Malindi was one of those memorial experiences. In *African Missionary Pilot* I wrote about those experiences.

A fourth week of labor and love had been scheduled for leaders in the humid climate of Malindi on the malaria-infested east coast of Kenya. Former White's Road School of Biblical Studies student of mine, Jim Babcock, who was at that time working in Malindi, had left his 4X4 in Nairobi on his way to the States. Martha and I picked it up in Nairobi and headed across the arid areas of eastern Kenya on our way to Malindi.

I must tell you about our chicken experience on the way to Malindi. At Tsavo, we stopped at this roadside "restaurant." We did not really know what to order, so we thought, what can be wrong with chicken and chips? So the young lady took our order and disappeared into the kitchen. We must have waited for at least an hour. I thought, "They must have had to go out and shoot a chicken and prepare it." But eventually, our young waitress reappeared. Sure enough, there was the chicken and chips. So I picked up a good looking drumstick, and tried to sink my teeth into it. Not a chance. I cannot remember if my teeth even made an impression in the meat. It was tough! So I called the young lady and complained that she should not sell this type of chicken to people. I demonstrated by

holding up the drumstick and trying to pull the meat off the bone. She sincerely apologized, saying, “We are so sorry. We ran out of our cooking chickens, so we caught one out back and prepared it. You will not have to pay for the meal.” We didn’t, and after finishing off the chips, moved on down the road. I have never again said in Africa when waiting for service at a restaurant, “They must have had to go out back and shoot and prepare one.”

Jim Babcock and Jim Beck had arranged a seminar for the leaders of coastal churches in the area of Malindi. It was a joy to stand before leaders of churches that were no more than six and a half years old as Christians. The Becks and Tim Talley had arrived on the coast six and a half years earlier and started the church from zero. There were at the time we visited about twenty-three assemblies of the church in the area. The missionaries had accomplished a great work.

After the seminar, Jim drove Martha and me over to the port city of Mombasa. We had scheduled Africa’s “Lunatic Express”—a train called such by a book with the same name—for our return trip to Nairobi. It was a hot and humid experience, as is everything around the east coast of Kenya. Sweat poured down our faces and the sun was setting over the western horizon when we edged out of Mombasa. It was a thirteen-hour jog and rattle until we saw relief upon our arrival in Nairobi in the early morning hours. Though the food was delicious on the train, there is no rest for the weary on African train trips. Somehow, all Martha and I could think about during the trip was our waterbed way back in Cape Town. Nevertheless, if you like trains and rocking beds, I would suggest the trip if you are ever in Kenya. (Since our trip there China has built a new high-speed train from Mombasa to Nairobi.)

When we arrived in Nairobi, we were again hosted by the Bolden family. Sunday morning presented an opportunity of preaching for the six-week old church with which the Boldens were working. That Sunday afternoon, Martha and I boarded South African Airways. When we topped out at 36,000 feet on our way back to South Africa, I looked over the plains of Kenya and felt a closeness to a land that was more than appreciation for beauty and nature. Somehow, the nation looked attractive from that altitude. However, I knew that down there on mother earth,

there were brethren seeking a better life. In those days of President Moi, they had become despondent with the government. Even nature did not deal them a fair hand. The citizens of this Developing World country truly knew that there had to be something better. In this environment, therefore, there was a people who found in Christ a total dependency on God that many people in the First World often do not discover.

Now, as in '97 trip, I headed again to Malindi. After I picked up my Ethiopian visa in Nairobi, I was off to Malindi. Seven and a half hours later I came again into this tropical city that reminded me so much of the scent of the coastal island environment of the Caribbean. There were the palm trees, the banana trees, the scent of the salt from the waves, and the rain showers that came and went. This is the beauty of tropical coastal living.

It had been four years since I had last visited this area with Martha. On my first visit, as explained before, Martha and I had stayed in a small guest house at the residence of the Tim Talleys. The Jim Becks were there at the time, but on this trip the Talleys and Babcocks were in the States and the Becks had permanently returned to the States. The Talleys and Babcocks were also in the States and I was wondering where I was going to stay. Plan B was the Silver Sands campsite next to the sea at the southern end of town. But in the rains that were in the area, this was not a very pleasant option.

Since I had been in the area of the church building four years before, an explosion of vegetation and construction completely disguised the area from my past recollections. I could not find the Beck's old house, and from there navigate to the Talley's house. I had no idea where the Babcock's house was located. So I drove around the area for about an hour, searching here and there, asking people where the church building might be located. Everyone would say over there, or over here. I was confused and somewhat frustrated as to what to do as the sun began to sink over the horizon. In futility I went to this bar and guest house in order to find out if the people knew where any Americans lived or where there was a church of Christ building. A young gentleman said he thought he knew where there was a church, so off we went.

Now you need to understand that in this section of Malindi one drove down into these tremendous potholes. Actually, they were not potholes, but craters in the road down into which you venture and then proceed up the other side. During this time of the year—it was still part of the rainy season—one is proceeding down into and out of a small lake. It's quite interesting for the visitor. You never know how deep the crater goes. Sometimes the water was almost to the top of the tires, which meant that if you opened the doors, you would have a good bath.

So I am into one crater lake after another, admiring all the time the commitment of the missionaries for living here. The sun had welcomed darkness and I was wondering about the success of Plan B. I was lost, wandering around an area of trees and huts with no place to go.

This church building to which my willing guide directed me happened to be the local Baptist church. Sorry, wrong church building. I repeated the name of the church to which I wanted to go. My guide knew little English, so communication had a lot to be desired. I said, "Church of Christ." In broken English he said he remembered a sign by that name somewhere in the city. So off to another area we went.

We stopped by three or four young men who were seated by a hut listening to a radio. One young boy said he knew where a sign was that said "Church of Christ." He was in and we were again into and out of crater lakes to another location. Sure enough, there it was. We found that sign. It was on the back of the wall of the church grounds, and after driving around to the front, I recognized the building. After two hours of searching, I felt like a found child who had wondered from home. From the building I was directed to the Babcock's house where I sincerely thanked God that I would not be sleeping in a tent for the night and in the rain. And believe me, it rained that night and all the next day.

### **An Incredible Journey**

Daniel Chewgo, Stephen Thethe and Moses Muinga are three Kenya preachers who lived on the eastern coast of Africa, around Malindi, Kenya. They had received information about the ACA Conference in Zimbabwe and yearned to go. They thus made plans that

they would go, regardless of the distance and the trials they knew they would have to go through to get to Chinhoyi, Zimbabwe.

What is unique about this trio of brave sojourners is that Moses had two unusable legs. He crawls on hands and knees wherever he goes. But he was determined to make the journey by bus and train, day and night across Africa to a meeting of church leaders in Chinhoyi. What courage; what determination.

The three courageous preachers set off on their journey by bus to Nairobi. From Nairobi they went by bus and train to and across Tanzania. It was then by bus across the pothole ridden roads of Zambia. The bus blew two tires in Zambia, and thus, limped into Lusaka with no spares and only one tire on one of the back duals. After three days and nights of constant travel, they finally arrived at Chinhoyi, Zimbabwe. Many times during the journey, Stephen and Daniel had to carry Moses. People along the way helped to transport them from one station to another by bicycles and local transport. Thieves also tried to relieve them of excess baggage. They slept wherever they could. Regardless of the hardships of the journey, they arrived at their destination. After the meeting in Zimbabwe, they had to return. It was again by bus and train across Zambia, then Tanzania, and finally to Kenya. It took them four days and nights of travel to return home.

The church of Africa is built upon the foundation of such commitment. As Africans become more international in their meanderings from one country in Africa to another, there will be the rise of the African missionary to travel outside his geographical location to new areas. The example of Moses, Stephen and Daniel, and others like them, will encourage others to see that international travel is possible for Africans. Their desire and commitment will be the strength that will encourage others to go into all Africa. These were the type of men with whom I worked in the Malindi seminar. Great men with great faith, the type of men who are examples of faith to young evangelists who would seek to preach the gospel to Africa.

### **Encouraging Leadership**

I was encouraged on my personal African odyssey by the determi-

nation of African brethren to have seminars. When I started the journey I had established set dates for seminars. In Malindi the brethren sent out word that a seminar was going to happen. The brethren in Malindi thus put together a very interesting seminar. I thought one of the most interesting things that happened at the beginning of the seminar was that they wanted to present me with a gift. So they asked me to get my camera. I got the camera, wondering what they were going to do. From behind the building they brought out this goat. They said, "Brother Dickson, we want to present this goat to you as a gift for teaching the seminar."

Well, what could I do with a goat on this trip in the back of my vehicle? I looked at it, and it look at me. The Malindi brethren smiled. I did too. One of the brethren was holding a knife behind him. He brought out the knife and said, "Brother Dickson, would you share your goat with us?" We had a great feast. I was relieved that I would not have to haul a goat around the rest of my journey.

It was a great meeting with the brethren in Malindi who wanted to have fellowship and Bible study. These brethren formed a lasting impression on my mind. Since the seminar, all the missionaries have since moved from Malindi. The brethren are on their own. But with leaders as Daniel, Steven and Moses, I have no doubt that there are good days ahead for the churches on the east coast of Kenya.

I have always been amazed at the dedication of sincere Christians who attend Bible study seminars. I have been humbled by the presence of men who have walked fifty to seventy miles to attend seminars for Bible study and fellowship with fellow leaders. Some have ridden bicycles over a hundred miles. I know some who have walked seventy-five to eighty miles. It is an example of the type of faith that is needed to evangelize a continent.

After the seminar in Malindi, one preacher came to me to say his good-byes. He said that he was from out of town and was passing through on his way with his wife to a funeral before the seminar began. However, he heard that a seminar was on. He told me he thought of Jesus' statement, "Let the dead bury the dead and come follow Me." He then told his wife to go on to the funeral; he was going to the semi-

nar. So there he was for three days. It is great to live on a continent where Christians still love the word of God.

While in Malindi, I had this interesting experience with my hair. I was looking like a shaggy dog, for I had not had a haircut since leaving Cape Town over a month before. So I went walking, trying to find in a country where only African heads dwelt, a barber that knew how to cut “white man’s hair.” I walked here and there looking for a barber shop. I found one, looked in and saw these shearers and bunches of hair on the floor like sheep’s wool. I said thank you, and passed on. The first straight haired man I saw, I asked him where he got his haircut. He gave the name of this small Asian shop off in the middle of the ghetto. After some searching, I did find it, and he shaved me like a cue ball. I should have been content with an “African” hair cut. It took four weeks for my hair to grow back to where I looked somewhat descent. So the only answer to a bad haircut is about three to four weeks.

### Out Of Kenya

I said my farewells to the brethren in Malindi, and was on to Nairobi, and then, to Ethiopia. I headed back to Nairobi where I enjoyed the gracious fellowship of Sam and Nancy Shewmaker for one night. We could have talked all night, but the next day I needed to head north. That night Nancy prepared a great meal that somehow seemed to be one of those meals you never forget. It was a “Western meal.” I guess I had eaten my own cooking and African food for too long.

Sam and Nancy Shewmaker have been marvelous servants of the Lord for Africa. They have put a lifetime into promoting and encouraging African missions. Africa needs such people who will dream and plan and promote Africans to evangelize the African continent. These are two people who know Africa. They understand the needs of Africans and the tremendous opportunities that prevail on the continent. As the editor of a news magazine he once published called *Drumbeat*, Sam was able in those days to have a positive impact on the African church.

Nancy had made me three sandwiches for the journey north out of Nairobi to Meru. The sandwiches never made it to the foot of Mt.

Kenya. I was hungry and the sandwiches were great. “Thank you,” Nancy.

The snow-capped Mt. Kenya has been the center of east African tales since yesteryear. It reaches over 17,000 feet into the subzero zones of the atmosphere. It is a snow capped peak that is rarely seen because of the clouds. But on this day, I caught a glimpse of the snow through a crack in the clouds. It was as if this great mountain gave this pilgrim a sneak peek at her beauty for a lasting picture.

A host of tales and stories surround this fabled mountain. I think one of the most interesting chronicles that happened on the mountain was in 1892 when a Dr. Walter Gregory, a professor of geology, scaled the slopes of the mountain with twelve Zanzibar porters. On one occasion near the top, and above the freezing level, Gregory had an interesting experience which he later wrote about concerning the uneducated character of his Zanzibar porters and their first experience with “demon possessed water.”

In the morning the men came to tell me that the water they had left in their cooking-pots was all bewitched. They said it was white, and would not shake; the adventurous Fundi had even hit it with a stick, which would not go in. They begged me to look at it, and I told them to bring it to me. They declined, however, to touch it, and implored me to go to it. The water of course had frozen solid. I handled the ice and told the men they were silly to be afraid of it, for this change always came over water on the tops of high mountains. I put one of the pots on the fire, and predicted it would soon turn again into water. The men sat around and anxiously watched it; when it had melted they joyfully told me that the demon was expelled (*The Great Rift Valley*).

One of the most interesting books I have ever read was written by Felice Benuzzi. It is entitled *No Picnic on Mt. Kenya*. During World War II, the English maintained a prisoner of war camp at the foot of Mt. Kenya. In the camp, Mr. Benuzzi, an Italian, was waiting out the years of the war. He was the son of a mountaineer, and thus, could stand the lure of the mountain no more. He and two of his fellow prisoners se-

cretly worked for months in the prison with the help of other prisoners to make climbing equipment. They made the necessary footwear, picks, and even an Italian flag they would place on top of the mountain. Early one night, they escaped from the prison, leaving the warden a note to say that they would be back. For several days they climbed the mountain. Benuzzi and one of his companions finally made it to one of the peaks of the mountain. After over two weeks, all three adventurous mountaineers showed up back at the prison camp and turned themselves in. So went the war for the Italians in East Africa.

As Mt. Kenya moved slowly by me on the right, I was driving into that part of Kenya that reminded me of the farmlands of South Africa. I thought, "I could feel good living in this area" as my farm instincts surfaced from childhood.

My bed for the night was provided by the Mark Nicholas family. The Nicholas family had been in Meru, Kenya for seven years when I arrived. They were a sweet family who had dedicated themselves to work among rural churches of central Kenya.

I suppose American supporters will never understand the life of a missionary. They live worlds away from the daily dedication of great men and women as the Nicholases who themselves give glory to God in their efforts to populate heaven. Praise God for the dedication of these great missionary families who willingly leave fathers and mothers and lands in order to go into another country to preach the gospel.

### **Toward The Ethiopian Border**

Names as Isiolo, Laisamis, Marsabit and Sololo probably mean nothing to you. Neither did they to me, for they were only dots on a map over which I had prayed in Cape Town. But now, they mean a lot to me. They are reminders of the toughest part of my months across Africa. They were islands of inhabitants in a faraway land on an isolated road to the Kenyan border town of Moyale where I would pass over into Ethiopia.

The great gulf between Isiolo and Moyale is a wilderness of rocks and sand that is over four hundred miles of the most challenging driving I have ever done. It was then, and still is as far as I know, an area of

bandit raids and diverse small villages here and there. It was that wild west part of Kenya that makes lasting impressions on those who venture into the area.

From the Isiolo police checkpoint, I assured the officer that I would catch up with the truck convoy that had left an hour before and was headed to Marsabit. I did catch up after an hour of hard driving down roads that unmercifully pounded both man and machine. I was then by the trucks in a cloud of dust and on to some village that was not on the map. It was there that I picked up a government health inspector who was headed for another village that was also not on the map. It seemed that I passed a host of villages and settlements that had no identification or location on the annals of mankind. I had driven off the map. I asked my traveling companion their names, but he would rattle off some incoherent name that I knew I would never remember.

I dropped the inspector at one of those “no name” villages, and then I headed on to Laisamis. There was this chief standing at the police check point who was speaking to me in some gibberish he evidently thought I could perfectly understand. However, I could not understand a word he was saying, but by his hand motions, I did figure out that he wanted a ride. I don’t think he even understood me to say, “Speak English only.” I did interpret his hand signals and the name “Marsabit.” This was the next small village on the route.

I would have taken the good chief, but he had this spear that was at least eight feet long and I wondered how in the world I would pack this thing away in the truck. Even his friends were pointing at the spear and I assumed they were also contemplating the problem. However, he was insistent that the spear go with him. The only way he could take it was to hold it outside the cab of the Nissan. This would not work because of the rough roads over which we were traveling.

I went over and signed in and out at the police check point at Laisamis. The policeman stated that there was a young school boy who needed a ride on to his home in Marsabit. So in he went. And since I had only one vacant seat for passengers, the chief and his spear looked forlorned as I drove away. Somehow, I felt sorry for the poor chap, but what could I have done with that spear. He would have to get a ride

in the trucks that immediately followed.

Amos was a sixteen-year-old young man living in a world unknown by the rest of the world. Neither did he know anything about a world that existed beyond his environment. He had been going to school at Laisamis and was on his way home to Marsabit. He thoroughly enjoyed the opportunity to use his little English he had been studying in school. He sat back in the left seat of the Nissan, threw his elbow out the window, and smiled from ear to ear as we passed his friends. He did not miss a chance to wave to them.

“What do you want to be when you grow up,” I asked to generate some conversation.

“Employed,” he responded.

In a world of no jobs, I guess he said a lot in that one word. There are no classified ads in his world. He was going to school with only a dream of some kind of job when he grew up.

After covering about 150 miles in six hours, I pulled into Marsabit in the early afternoon and went straight for the Catholic Convent where I was told to go for the night. There was a sister Eugene (my middle name) in this convent whom I was told would put me up in the Pastor’s quarters for the night. And thus she did. The bed was as hard as a rock, but it was better than the bush in the bandit territory of northern Kenya.

Northern Kenya is Catholic territory. I asked this Catholic sister how long the Catholic church had been in the area. She said that they had been there past anyone’s remembrance. In other words, they had been there since the days of the colonials and early settlers.

At the time I was there, we had yet to even consider the region. No missionary of the church had ever been to this region of Kenya. Chances are, there would be none to go there within the years to come. Many feel that Kenya has been evangelized since there was a large number of missionaries in the country for several years at that time. However, do not get the impression that the country is evangelized. There are vast segments of the country that will be left unevangelized forever if we pull our interest out of this country. This is where we must encourage the Kenyan brethren to reach out to the north in their country. We need Kenyan missionaries to go into all their country.

Africa is a continent so vast and so populated, that because of its own vastness, great numbers of inhabitants will never know the message of the gospel. Do I sound cynical? The frustrating thing about traveling through this continent is knowing that there will never be a messenger of the gospel to go to the vast majority of the people you see strolling along the road. I would give out a Bible correspondence application along the road to this or that person, wondering if by chance some policeman or some stranger along the way will be challenged to study and obey the gospel in isolated areas as northern Kenya. Who knows? Who prays for laborers to come into these isolated fields of labor?

I stopped at one village in the remote edges of northern Kenya, and there was this young Anglican couple from Australia working in the bushes alone and away from civilization.

As I sat on that hard bed in the Catholic Convent of Marsabit, I wondered what shall we do for this small town and tens of thousands like it throughout Africa. What shall we do?

I must relate to you here the experiences of two fellow Kansans in reference to their experiences of Marsabit, Kenya that took place in the 1920's. Outside Marsabit is a lake in the hollow of an old volcano. It is called Lake Paradise and was named such by Osa Johnson from Chanute, Kansas in 1923. Martin and Osa Johnson were adventurous photographers who roamed Africa in the 1920s taking pictures for cinema showings throughout America. In order to reach Marsabit on one of their expeditions, they tackled the same territorial route I had driven on my '97 trip. They had heard of the existence of this lake but were unable to find it until a faithful guide named Boculy decided to reveal its location to them. In her book entitled, *I Married Adventure*, Mrs. Johnson described the discovery and naming of the lake in the following manner:

For days we marched behind our ancient guide in some very rough country. For another day we climbed steadily, and then, completely without warning, we were at the edge of a high cliff overlooking one of the loveliest lakes I had ever seen.

Martin and I stared down without speaking, and then, at each other, and then, at Boculy. He stood with an almost unhappy perplexity on his face, and again he was rubbing the top of his head and patting his stomach. Apparently he had warred with himself about bringing us here. He had wanted this hidden paradise to remain a sanctuary for his beloved elephants, but his devotion to Martin had prevailed.

The lake was shaped like a spoon, about a quarter of a mile wide and three quarters of a mile long, and it sloped up into steep, wooded banks two hundred feet high. We stood at the tip of the spoon, which was a high cliff. Opposite, a deep cleft served as the handle. It lay in the center of an extinct volcano, and the back which ran back a hundred feet or so to the edge of the forest was of hard, washed lava.

A tangle of water-vines and lilies—great, blue African lilies—grew in the shallows at the water’s edge. Wild ducks, cranes, and egrets circled and dipped. Animals, more than we could count, stood quietly knee-deep in the water and drank.

“It’s paradise, Martin!” I said.

He nodded.

That was how Lake Paradise was given its name.

### **From Marsabit To Moyale, Kenya**

It was almost another six grueling hours from Marsabit to Moyale. Moyale is a city that is divided between Kenya and Ethiopia. The road tortured the tires and chassis of the Nissan over rocks, potholes and ravines of this Great North Road they needed to rename Bad Bundu Bush Trail.

My companion from Marsabit to Moyale was a corporal who had been in the military service for thirty-four years. He could not speak much English, so we had a broken conversation here and there along the way. He knew all the police and soldiers along the route, so it made each check point a small reunion. He was actually the ranking man in charge of some of the guards at the checkpoints.

I cleared immigration and customs out of Kenya with no hassles. There was this Kenyan immigration officer that evidently needed some companionship. We talked about a host of subjects as if we were long-

time friends. He stamped my passport and I told him I would be back in two weeks.

Coming into Ethiopia was a different matter. First of all, I arrived on Saturday. Fortunately, the Ethiopian immigration official had showed up and he took care of my passport. However, customs did not show up on Saturdays and Sundays. So there I was, stuck in limbo at the border with a vehicle that needed to be cleared into Ethiopia. The immigration officer was most helpful in trying to call the customs officer on a telephone that was surely made sometime in the twenties. He could not find him. I asked him to keep trying and I would wander around town.

It was 1:00<sup>PM</sup>, so I headed on foot up the main street of Moyale, Ethiopia. I wondered about a half mile or so, thinking over what I was going to do while stranded until Monday morning. I went to this truck driver's hotel that had a place I could drive my vehicle into for security. I asked the lady how much it was for the night. It was US\$1.50. What would you expect for a US\$1.50? I asked to see the room. Sure enough, there was a bed and chair. I guess that's all you get for US\$1.50. I told the inn keeper that I might be back, since I was having trouble with customs. I christened the hotel Danky Inn.

I wandered back to the border. It was about 3:00<sup>PM</sup> now. I stopped for a moment in a quiet place and prayed that God would release me from this border and allow me to go on my way. When I went inside, the immigrations officer reported that he had contacted the custom's officer, and the man was there. The customs officer asked me for my *carne*, filled out the information, stamped this and that, and freed me. Prayer answered.

He had to inspect the vehicle before I could go. This took no less than thirty minutes as he picked through every article as if on a scavenger hunt for whatever. I didn't mind. I was just thankful that God had answered my prayer.

It was after 4:00<sup>PM</sup> when I skipped out of customs and immigrations, feeling good, but still in a dilemma. Now I had to make a decision. I had planned to drive to Dila, Ethiopia and stay at the Italian Mission which is just north of the city, past the police check point.

However, Dila was four to five hours away. I really did not cherish the thought of arriving in the dark and then trying to find a place about which I had only read in a book. So I decided to go back to Danky Inn and camp for the night.

Interesting conversations always arose on the trip when people asked me from where I traveled. They would see the license plates of the Nissan and knew that it was from a faraway land. When I told them I was from Cape Town, South Africa, their expressions gave away their surprise. “Did you drive all the way?” “How far is it?” “Did you come alone?” “Are you sure?” “How’s Nelson Mandela?” So it went.

One can meet a host of different people on the Great North Road. People are the same all over the world. Some may think they are different by leading complicated lives. But the inner nature of man is still as God created him. My adventure was my privilege to experience so many different people in so many different areas of Africa. It was truly a great experience on the ‘97 trip.

One interesting thing about the people I met was the change of customary clothing along the way. I traveled from one tribal region to another. The styles of clothes changed, especially among the women. The women seemed to be so imaginative. Western clothing was worn by most men. However, the women seemed to be most inventive when it came to adorning themselves for everyday life. I could not begin to describe the diversity of women’s clothes. Just take my word for it. Women have a great imagination when it comes to clothes. Paris would flip over some of the styles of East Africa.

Well, I was stuck in the Danky Inn and thought about Martha. It was Saturday and she would have left Japan by now and would be in Dallas, Texas with our youngest daughter, Lisa. She would probably be at the first Taco Bell eating a beef burrito and drenching it down with a large cool Dr. Pepper. Somehow, a feeling of depression passed over me as I sat there eating a granola bar, chasing it with peanuts and drowning it all with sips from a canteen of lukewarm water.

I must tell you also that I was trying to figure out in Moyale how I was going to live for two weeks with one pair of pants and three pull-over shirts. The problem was that I had left all my hanging clothes

back in Nairobi with the Shewmakers. I suppose old age will do this to you. But, I tried not to let it bother me. Of course, it might bother others if I did not wash that often. Some might become tired of seeing me in the same old clothes day after day. But then, this is the way Africa is anyway.

## **Chapter 19**

### **NORTH TO COFFEE COUNTRY**

I looked forward to making the trip to Ethiopia. I had known of the Ethiopian work since the days of the great famine relief program of the church in the early 1980s. Churches of Christ in America contributed over seven million dollars in that relief effort. I had heard all the stories about the growth of the church and the great things God was doing in the country, especially the fact that the relief effort saved an estimated 50,000 lives. I had also heard all the stories about the poverty. And in the midst of the stories there were accounts of great faith across the country. I was now going to see for myself. I was on my way across the Kenyan-Ethiopian border and into the land of the eunuch.

I arose early in the morning at Danky Inn in Moyale, Ethiopia and headed for Addis Ababa, the capital. However, in leaving Moyale, everyone had to clear through the police check point on the north end of town. So there I waited for an hour, until 7:00<sup>AM</sup>. Once released, I was off. The policeman said not to stop in the bush because of bandits. I took his advice and drove straight through to Addis.

If you ever drive from Moyale to Addis Ababa, count on at least eleven hard hours. The road was not bad, but in some places it did rattle my teeth. You will often have to compete on the road with people and all the assortment of animals as cows, donkeys, dogs, sheep and goats.

However, I did figure out where the majority of the population of Ethiopia must be. It is along the road from Moyale to Addis Ababa. And they are all walking on the road. The last half of the way is going from one village to another, from one pedestrian to another, donkey after donkey. And be sure to watch the people. They are like the people

of India on the road. The folks in India are like the cows. They just lumber from one side of the road to the other. The road is just a sidewalk and the people wonder what you are doing on it with your vehicle. You can be blasting your horn, and some will not even look back as they stroll down the middle of the road.

Southern Ethiopia is as beautiful as it can be. The mountains are gorgeous. I kept looking for the desert of Ethiopia, of which I always thought the country would be. Somehow, I thought that this country was one of those dry deserts of the world. But the desert was not in the southern part of the country. The southwest is lush with vegetation. The north, however, starts to relinquish to the Sahara belt across Africa. It is desert.

Everyone thinks it is hot in Ethiopia. In the north it does get hot. If you are in the central and south, however, it gets cool, very cool. When you are up at seven to eight thousand feet, it is cool. Bring a sweater.

I arrived in Addis Ababa with a map of the city that Behailu Abebe, an Ethiopian preacher, sent to me in order to find where to go once I arrived. So I kept driving down this maze of people and trucks on the outskirts of the southern part of Addis during the rush hour. Ethiopians in Addis drive like Brazilians. They know how to turn a good single lane highway into a two lane. They can turn a two lane into three or more. Trucks are everywhere. Bring a gas mask.

I dodged from truck to pedestrian until I thought I should turn to the left in order to go to where I thought I was supposed to be. I had Behailu's map on the steering wheel, while watching traffic with one eye and dodging pedestrians with the other. In the interim I took glances at the map. I was holding my nose right and it was tense driving right during rush hour.

I did turn at the right street, followed Behailu's scribble on the map and ended up at the church "compound," as they called it. Was I ever glad to see it. There was someone there who could speak English. And so I was ever thankful to Joseph who let me in the guest house.

After four days on the road, and an eleven-hour drive for the day, it was good to be around brethren, even though I could not understand a

word they were saying. It was great to see a decent bed and some real food. I had been sustaining myself on granola bars and a bag of peanuts Flo Caulderwood had bought for me in Malawi. (If she only knew how much I needed those peanuts, for I stretched them straight through to Addis.) Well, I cooked myself a giant plate of food right out of the can and just scarfed it all down. It felt good.

I had arrived about two days early and thought I would take a much needed rest by working on one of the seven books I was trying to complete on this trip. Behailu came around about 8:00<sup>PM</sup> and it was sure good to see him. We really had a great talk. He said we could start the next morning. Why not? So much for a rest. And fortunately, Behailu's clothes fit. One problem solved.

### **God Works In Ethiopia**

American missionaries of the church first came to Ethiopia in the early 1960s. The first church was started in 1963. Since those early beginnings great things have happened. In 1997 there was an estimated six hundred assemblies of the church throughout the country. Most of the assemblies were in the southern part of the country. There were few in the north. Around Addis there was also a great number of assemblies as a result of mission efforts out of Addis.

One encouraging aspect about the nature of the Ethiopian Christians was their desire to evangelize the country. There was an indigenious spirit among church leaders to work in harmony with one another in order to reach out to the lost. Since there were in 1997 many Sudanese refugees in the country, there was a great awareness to reach out in a mission effort to preach the gospel in western Ethiopia in the refugee camps. These refugees would eventually go back home, and thus, start churches in southern Sudan. This method of evangelism had worked many times in African refugee camps, and so, such was the plan of some Ethiopian brethren.

When in Ethiopia one senses he has left central and East Africa for another cultural environment. He actually has. The Ethiopians are a humble and hard working people. They are not lazy in any sense of the word. Though the nation went through seventeen years of communist

oppression until 1993, the people were emerging with hope for the future and a better life. The spirit of freedom never left the people during the years of communist rule. Though the government at the time had a lot to be desired, Ethiopians who had scattered to the winds of the world during the communist era were migrating back to the country, bringing with them a knowledge of foreign living and business energy that was revitalizing the nation. In those years of economic reconstruction, one wondered what the future would hold. In observing the nature of the people, one could not but feel that there were greater things to come for the country.

### **Encouragement For God's Travelers**

One of the unexpected results of my trip across Africa in those days was the great encouragement my visit had on the thinking of many African brethren. I never thought such a preaching tour was any manifestation of faith, but many brethren seemed to think so. In Ethiopia the brethren could not believe that I had driven from South Africa to Ethiopia and alone at that. When Behailu introduced me during several occasions, brethren seemed to think that such was a remarkable feat. Behailu said it was an encouragement that they should also go out to preach the gospel. Many said that they were encouraged to step out on faith to go preach. If such a trip encouraged some also to go forth, then I suppose this would be an unexpected serendipity of the trip. It was my thought all along that this is what evangelists are supposed to do, that is, go about preaching the gospel to the lost and strengthening the churches. Maybe evangelists have become so located that they have forgotten that the original evangelists in the New Testament were to go forth and preach the good news. It is my personal belief that we need a restoration in sending evangelists out. Too many are held up at home, leaving a world unevangelized for the next generation.

### **Graduations**

One of the treats I had in Ethiopia was to give the graduation speech and sending forth commission to eight graduates of the training Bible school in Addis Ababa. I thought the brethren did a very touching thing

for the five men and three women who graduated from the school. They had taped a map of the world on the chalkboard. The graduates placed their hands on the map and bowed their heads. The leaders of the church encircled them by holding hands. We prayed to commission these graduates to evangelize the world which they were touching. It was a moving experience.

### **Thankful For Freedom**

Those who have never experienced the choking wave of a communist oppression will never understand the oppression that makes citizens foreigners in their own country. In listening to brothers Behailu Abebe and Demere Chernet talk concerning the seventeen years of communist rule in Ethiopia, one feels a strong sense of thanksgiving for not having to have had such an experience.

Both Abebe and Chernet spoke of life and death experiences in their own lives. They told of one of the teachers of the deaf school on the church compound who was arrested during school hours, taken out and shot on the street. People were taught to deny God. Religions were suppressed. Missionaries were run from the country. Ethiopians fled as refugees all over the world. Chernet, one of the members of the Addis church, was arrested with thirty-one others who were to be executed. He was delivered. Demere spoke of driving to and from work seeing dead bodies lying along the street. They were tagged with a “red terror” tag in order to remind the people that this was not a paper (white) terror era, but one of blood. Everyone had to be careful what he or she said and to whom anything was said, for there were spies everywhere. Political meetings were scheduled in every district at 10:00<sup>AM</sup> on Sunday. Everyone was to attend. One young lady who was a member of the church decided to leave one such meeting with her Bible and go worship God. She was arrested, beaten and imprisoned for two months.

On and on such stories went. I have never gone through a communist oppression. But after listening to the Ethiopian brethren talk about their dark years, I knew I never wanted to experience such. I was thankful for growing up in a free country. I was thankful for living in a free country at the time. We must thank God that He has delivered our

Ethiopian brethren and their country from the dark ages of communist oppression.

One thing that was commendable about South Africa during the '60s through the '80s was its stand against communism. The ANC during those years was very Marxist in philosophy. Most people do not understand, nor give credit to the government of South Africa for holding out during the decades when communism was fashionable in southern Africa. The South African government held out until the ANC grew up and the communist scourge of the world finally fell with the Berlin Wall in the '90s. But in southern Africa, we who now live in South Africa owe much to the former government in all its apartheid nonsense. We owe a debt for not allowing a communistic government to take over.

Most of you who read this book will never understand the struggles of a country that has gone through the scourge of Marxist mentality. I cannot understand. You and I can never fully appreciate the great faith that was manifested by the Ethiopian church leaders who faced death in order to maintain their faith. Some of them did not make it through the onslaught of the communist terror. However, those who did, have come through with a faith that has been tested by fire. It is upon this foundation that the future of the Ethiopian church rests.

### **Hope For Sudan**

The country of Sudan just west of Ethiopia is another country that is going through oppression. It is a country of over 140 languages and dialects. It is a country with an Islamic government in the north with a Christian oriented south. The government has been highly intolerant of those of the south. As a result, in those days refugees had fled to the east of the country and over into Ethiopia, south to Uganda, west to the Central Republic of Africa, and also into the Democratic Republic of Congo. One particular refugee named Peter was imprisoned for five months. Almost daily he was beaten. He was formerly a businessman who had acquired several vehicles in his work and built a very successful business. However, his life changed when he was arrested for no apparent reason and subjected to beatings in prison.

After five months, Peter was released. No reason was given. He immediately went home and found his mother and friends. They had been having special prayer meetings that he be released.

In a few days, Peter found out that the police were after him again. This time it was not for imprisonment but for one of those “disappearance happenings” that occurs too often in such social turmoil. He thus fled to Egypt. He came into contact with Christians in Cairo, and subsequently, obeyed the gospel. He then traveled on to Kenya. There he enrolled in the Nairobi Great Commission School and studied in order to return one day to Sudan and preach the gospel.

Peter’s story could be told many times over. In Addis Ababa a church was started among the Sudanese refugees just four months before I arrived. While there, I had the privilege of meeting with the twenty-five men of the group in a special seminar in order to ground these new believers in the faith. Four of these twenty-five men were preaching, though more than half had already preached. Behailu was working specifically with the four preachers in order to train them to go to designated regions in Ethiopia where there were Sudanese refugees. We also enrolled these men in the Institute for distance training courses. Since my visit to Ethiopia, the church has moved over into southern Sudan. With great sacrifice faithful Sudanese preachers are taking the gospel to the southern part of the country.

In the early ‘90s I was once listening to an interview with a representative of Frontline Mission who had smuggled himself into southern Sudan a few years before my ‘97 trip. He went into the country in order to meet with protestant groups who were meeting, sometimes in secrecy. The one who made the visit explained how desperately poor the people were and how they suffered from many sicknesses. In those days of intense civil war, many of the people were in poor physical condition and needed medical attention. The visitor, named John Leach, said they had little medicine, and no doctors in the area he visited. During the conclusion of the interview, the one doing the interview asked, “If the people of southern Sudan would ask you to bring them back something, what would they ask?” There was a brief silence with the interviewer. John then replied, “When the meetings which we con-

ducted were over, they would always ask that when I came back, could I please bring some Bibles.” The people of southern Sudan are a religious people. They are historically of such a nature since the roots of Christianity go back many centuries.

Another encouraging effort about Sudan was a meeting Behailu and I had with two former Sudanese refugees who made their way to America because of their UN refugee status. They had just graduated from the Sunset School in Lubbock and were making plans to return to Uganda and work with the more than 300,000 Sudanese refugees in the country in Uganda. They were on a two week survey trip and were collecting needed information for their return. I prayed that God bless their plans.

God works in wondrous ways. I need to add to the story here about an interview I heard with John Leach that reemphasizes the fact of how God works in our lives. The story begins when I heard an interview with John while sitting in my office in Cape Town. I believe the date was around 1994. Little did I know that this same John Leach twenty-three years later in 2017 would be sitting in our living room in Philadelphia, South Africa. A friend of ours was a member of a Cape Town church that supported John and his wife who had been laboring for three years in the far northern corner of Zambia.

John said, “Twenty years ago I moved around Africa going into war-torn areas to preach the gospel. But three years ago—John is an ex-military soldier of South Africa—my wife and I decided to focus.” While sitting on my living room couch twenty-three years after the radio interview, John said, “I wanted to find a primitive people I could help bring into the 21<sup>st</sup> century.” So he found such a people in the forest area of northwestern Zambia and he and Leslie went to work.

After some time during the meeting, I asked John, “What type of vehicle are you using in the bush?”

John responded, “Junk.” John was not receiving a great amount of support. He had the support of his wife and heart, with God as his primary supporter.

I then told John that since I had bought a Ford Ranger, I was looking

for a needy mission to which I could make available the Toyota Landcruiser I had used for sixteen years. I told John that I had been praying for a year to send someone our way who could use the Landcruiser.

After resettling himself on our couch, John anxiously asked, “What do you want for it?”

I said, “I don’t know. Give me a couple days, for I have no idea what it is worth.” And I didn’t. But wide-eyed John informed me that he needed to know within three days for he was returning to Johannesburg in order to make preparations for his return to Zambia.

So Martha and I again prayed about this matter. We decided that the Landcruiser could not be sold for it had been devoted to God sixteen years before.

I called John late on Thursday and said I was leaving for a mission trip on Friday morning around 9:00<sup>AM</sup>. I then added, “I will sell the vehicle to you for one Rand (about .09 US\$ cents) and a cappuccino.” After he caught his breath over the phone, he said he would be out in the morning.

John came to our house at 7:00<sup>AM</sup>. and still he was in a state of disbelief. I said to John, “Here’s the keys. Let the vehicle continue to bring glory to God.” And he went on his way rejoicing, for John was prepared to give us a large sum some of money for the Landcruiser.

In 1997 I was in the Nissan, but after the mission safari, I would trade it for the Toyota Landcruiser, which was the Landcruiser that I gave to John.

### **Working Through Ethiopia**

In 1997, I must confess that my stay and work on the Ethiopian section of my trip was most rewarding. Not only was I able to do far more work than I had originally planned, but the graciousness and maturity of the Ethiopian Christians overwhelmed me.

The church at the Ethiopian mission compound in Addis is an exceptional group of people. These brethren fed me every morsel of food that I needed while I was housed at the mission. They paid for my meals and hotel while I traveled for seminars with Behailu. They filled my fuel tanks to the top in order to get me on to Nairobi, Kenya. They paid for my visa extension, toothpaste and whatnot. Not one expense did I have to pay while I worked with and for this church as their two-

week evangelist for Ethiopia. What Christian maturity! What love! There was no cuffed hand in the church of Ethiopia.

It was a joy to meet with the preachers of Ethiopia in five different seminars I conducted in five different regions. Behailu hauled me to places as Jajura, Matoria, Sidamo, Santeria and Gobadamo. I gave daily lectures to the 175 students of the deaf school in Addis which is run by the mission station. I was able to do a seminar for the Sudanese leaders, as well as, the preacher students and staff at the mission station. It was a thrill to be with Behailu for my days in Ethiopia. He is certainly a giant among Christian leaders and one of the most capable workers of the kingdom I have met.

The Ethiopian church will see great effects ahead because God is using some great leaders in the church. Throughout the seminars I emphasized that it is time that Ethiopians arise to the occasion of sending forth missionaries. The effect of the seminars, according to those present, was most encouraging. I am personally excited about what will happen in the years to come with the Ethiopian church and its mission to take the gospel, not only to Ethiopia, but to neighboring countries. I believe this area of God's vineyard is ready to send forth workers. God's word has fallen on fertile Ethiopian soil for great things to come. Keep an eye on Ethiopia. I think we will be surprised as to what will happen in the future of the church in this country.

### **Working On The Fringe Of Africa**

I need to inject a thought here concerning the nature of the opportunity for African evangelism. Keep in mind that there are thousands of languages and dialects spoken in Africa. Keep in mind also that the borders of African nations were drawn by the colonials in their scramble for African territory during the years of colonialism. Now we live in the present, and Africa to a great extent, is living in the past of its tribal heritage. The tribes had their territories, but the territories were not marked with a penciled line on a map. This translates into many Africans who freely move from one nation to another. One can stand at any African border post between two countries and see the locals passing from one side to another with a small piece of paper that functions as a

type of passport. Beyond the border post, however, they just pass from one side to another. Unfortunately, many of the colonials, when they drew the borders between nations, did not recognize tribal boundaries, and thus drew borders right through tribal groups.

What this all means is that the border between African counties is very porous for the Africans. They go back and forth daily with little or no restrictions. I was once in a lectureship with Africans and mentioned the curse of visas for the traveling missionary. I stated, "But you Africans have little concern for these matters." They all laughed, knowing what I meant.

This translates into a great opportunity for African evangelism. Within a country, there should be a great deal of evangelism among those who live close to any African border. For example, those in northern Namibia can walk forty-nine kilometers into Angola without going through any border crossing. The residents on the Angolan side are of the same tribal group as those in neighboring Namibia to the south of the border. If the church reaches the fringes of every nation, the gospel will go throughout Africa. We must thus set up our mission outposts on the borders of every nation in order to reach into those nations for which we cannot get visas. The African brethren will get there without the visa. This places a great responsibility on the African brethren as they seek to reach across the continent with the gospel. We have in the past used "refugee evangelism" to reach nations as the converted refugees return home after the civil war. It is time now to strategically plant the church on the borders of every nation in order that we reach into every nation. We might call this "border missions." The church within every nation should set up border missions with those nations of Africa to which the gospel is yet to go.

### **Closing Out Ethiopia**

I tweaked off my flashlight at 3:30<sup>AM</sup> outside a schoolroom where I was sleeping in Santeria, Ethiopia. I could see the Southern Cross which indicated my direction of travel for the day. It was a last day, my last day in Ethiopia as I would point my traveling home toward the Kenya border 300 miles to the south.

What could I conclude about my illustrious experiences in the historic Ethiopia? How does one mingle culture, work and experiences into a finality of life-changing impact upon one's life? Countries do that to you. As I checked off the last parcel of Ethiopian soil, I would not be the same because of a people who have the tendency to affect you in a deep way. Ethiopians are gracious. They are industrious. They are generous. They are poor, curious, sometimes backward, and yet, sometimes most progressive. They are sometimes a series of cultural contradictions past finding out.

Ethiopia has been molded out of a history of colonial occupation and conflict. It is an old culture, with old religions, old buildings, old churches. It is believed that the "black Jews" of Ethiopia date back to a love affair between the Queen of Sheba and Solomon. Knowing Solomon's tastes for women, one could have little doubt about the authenticity of the legend. At least, the tremendous Jewish nature of the Ethiopian religions predates Christ by many centuries.

In 1993, Ethiopia emerged from the national tragedy of communism. Though the dark years of oppression have left an indelible scar on the soul of the nation, the people are emerging the best they can under a government that allows freedom for economic growth. There are better times ahead.

Ethiopia was an opportunity for me to do what I was supposed to do. I was able to conduct several seminars for the preachers and church leaders of over 350 of the 600 churches of the country. It was a great opportunity to be able to have input into more than half of the churches of the country on the basic principles of missions and church support of evangelism.

As I stated before, I do not think I have ever been treated more hospitably in my years as an evangelist in mission areas than by the Ethiopian brethren. From the day I arrived in Addis to the moment I left, every possible need I had was cared for. I was overwhelmed by their loving fellowship.

I have stored away a catalog of experiences that will remind me of this beloved country. I learned that if there was some disease that killed all the donkeys of Ethiopia, the economy of the country would crash.

My craving for the “green gold,” coffee, was reaffirmed. (It is believed that coffee originated in Ethiopia.) The principal food, njira, was just short of OK. Highways and streets are only large sidewalks with the obnoxious presence of cars and trucks. Cows wander aimlessly and you wonder who they belong to. The southern mountains are as green carpeted protrusions of earth that penetrate the clouds. Every man carries some kind of a stick and every person stares at you like you are something from outer space. And then there are the flies, flies, flies. They say they received them from the leftovers of Moses’ plague on Egypt. Believe me, the plague continues. I will always be able to identify an Ethiopian in any country of the world. He will be the one waving his hands in front of his face, even if there are no flies.

One night we were calmly studying the Bible with the only member of the church in the major city of Dila. When this brother was first contacted through a World Bible School ad in a newspaper, he knew he had to do something. He was given the name of Behailu in Addis. So he packed up his wife and youngest of six children, and caught a bus for the capital. He was baptized after more studies with Behailu, and thus, returned to Dila to be a witness for the gospel.

So I sat there one calm night in his home and listened to him explain the persecution, the loneliness, but also the faith he had that he would never deny. All of us were greatly encouraged.

We suddenly heard a commotion next door. We first thought someone was being attacked. All of us rushed out of the house. The entire neighborhood was out in the street by now. A man was on the ground screaming in utter terror. He had been bitten by a poisonous snake. Our vehicle was the only one there so we immediately manhandled the man into the back seat, for he had gone berserk. Terror distorted his face. He had lost all control because of fear. We left him in the hospital and wondered about his fate. I never found out the fate of the man, for I had to leave that night to return to the south. But the incident caused us to wonder about the brevity of life, the uncertainty of tomorrow on the African continent. We considered the blessedness of God’s grace and the assurance of salvation through His grace.

Africa is a continent of transition. It is a continent of life and

death, rebels and coups, famine and floods. It is a continent receptive to the gospel because of the uncertainty of life. I know that heaven will be full of Africans because they have no heaven on earth. While in Ethiopia I believe I had the pleasure of meeting the oldest preacher in Africa at the time. His name was Fitch Mago and he was at least 100 years old. Some believed that he was around 110 years old. He had walked twenty-five miles to attend my last seminar in Ethiopia and was still active in preaching the gospel in his community. It will be great to be in heaven to talk to this man concerning the activities of his life.

I was encouraged by the Ethiopian church. God is doing great things through His group of disciples in this area of His vineyard. Continue to pray for this country.

## **Chapter 20**

### **RETURNING SOUTH THROUGH KENYA**

I checked through immigrations and customs in Ethiopia at the Ethiopian/Moyale border in less than thirty minutes. This was sure better than my arrival two weeks before. I then drove over to the Kenya side of the border and walked to the immigration office. When the official saw me come into the office, he smiled, got up from the desk and came around and gave me a big hug. We were as old friends that had met again. Who says that all immigration officials are not friendly?

As I travel through the countries of Africa, there are usually police check points in countries that are not as stable as they would like to be. And then much of the time, there are police check points just to give young policemen something to do. Police check points are one of those irritations that one must put up with along the roads of Africa. They are like persistent flies around a honey and peanut butter sandwich. They are just there, often for no reason at all. Long since some civil unrest has passed, police or ex-soldiers must have some place to waste away their lives in idleness and tourist pestering. I suppose a book could be written about people processing through the endless assortment of police check points throughout Africa. It would be an interesting book.

Don Boyd once told me of a lively conversation one missionary

had with the seemingly useless police check point about two miles east of Livingstone, Zambia on the only main road to the city from the east. You must think about this. You are on the main road going to Livingstone which is only about two miles down the road. Our fellow evangelist had traveled this road numerous times while working at the Namwianga Mission just east of Livingstone. Every time into Livingstone, you are stopped. Time after time, the policeman asks, “Where are you going?” Of course, anyone would see that the only place you could be going was Livingstone, just down the road. One day the robotic policeman asked the missionary, “Where are you going?” The missionary simply stated, “To the moon.” The policeman replied, “OK, carry on.”

I have learned that many of these policemen—do not think of the typical American policeman—are just young recruits out there doing their boring time. I often pulled out a Bible correspondence course application and went to work enrolling the policemen who were there. Sometimes, I needed a break from the boredom of driving and just started up a conversion about nothing. One key is to disarm the supposedly tough guy. He tries to be tough because he has been told to be such. I think it is a challenge to break these young men down by a good smile and lively conversation. When I interrupted their card games, I asked who was winning. Occasionally, someone wanted a ride to some location. If I had room for men and guns, then on we would go. I’ll always remember the pack of Ghanaian soldiers who were walking home one evening after they had done their duties in Accra, Ghana. It was about 7:00<sup>PM</sup> and there were about six soldiers with all their military paraphernalia. I stopped and asked if they needed a ride (I was in a twin cab Datsun.) They said great. So in they came; guns battering heads, grenades and bayonets boggling around. We were packed in like sardines. If a gun had gone off, there would probably have been three casualties and three or four wounded.

In military active areas in some countries, the intensity of the environment can be a little greater than in times of peace. In southern Ethiopia they were checking for gun runners. Long rods were poked through sacks of seed in order to find guns. Vehicles were thoroughly inspected, top to bottom. You can’t mind such, for these lads are doing their job.

Some gun might get through that would eventually be turned on them.

Ethiopia must have the most curious people in Africa. A police check point in a village brings a host of curious people to see what is inside your vehicle. Everyone gathers around in order to gaze at you and what might be inside. They look through the windows. I found it challenging to pick out a particular gazer and try to stare him down. Sometimes I would win by him looking away first. But many times their infatuation was just too great. So there we would be, two zombies just staring at one another. I don't think Ethiopians ever blink.

### **Back In Nairobi**

I was back on the tread mill of the Moyale/Isiolo road doing penance for some sin I must have committed in the past. I was again headed for Nairobi across the northern plains of Kenya where I could see the camel caravans and wild ostriches roam through dust blown landscapes.

I could not say it was good to be back in Nairobi. Nairobi is one of those cities you like to be from. I would be happy if they would construct an interstate bypass so I could just go on to the next destination. It is just a big dirty, crime infested sore of African civilization. Does that sound too harsh? Maybe so. The city of Nairobi began as John Robbers stated, "A sergeant once set up a tent and pitched a capital." R. O. Preston, in His book, *The Genesis of Kenya Colony*, wrote the following of the city:

Nairobi in the month of May 1899, the month and year in which we moved camp to this place, may be described thus: A bleak, swampy stretch of soggy landscape, windswept, devoid of human habitation of any sort, the resort of thousands of wild animals of every species. The only evidence of the occasional presence of human kind was the old caravan track skirting the bog-like plain.

By 1929, things had not changed much. In her book, *East African Journey*, Margery Perham wrote,

Nairobi itself is a most disappointing town. I had expected something

rather smart and well-built. It is one of the shabbiest and shoddiest towns I have seen in my travels, which is saying a great deal. There are hardly any pavements and the roadway itself is most primitive. You either stumble through mud or are blinded by gritty dust. The only decent public building is the railway office. (Government House is outside the town.) Most government offices are tumble down tin shacks: the Supreme Court is like an abandoned warehouse.

Nairobi seems to have been caught in a time lock of Developing World disappointments. But this is Africa. Before we would pick too much on poor Nairobi, we must remember that she has a lot of twin sisters in Africa. African cities are not the best in appearance, except for South Africa. Am I prejudiced?

I say the above to compliment the missionaries who live in the large Developing World African city. These are most unusual people who struggle through a maze of hardships to snatch souls out of these social grinders of the human spirit. Living and evangelizing in a bush environment of Africa has its struggles. But so does the African city. It takes a unique person to serve with his family in cities as Nairobi, Lusaka, Kinshasa and such like.

While in Nairobi, I enjoyed again the great hospitality of Bill Searcy, and his three children. Bill and the children were off to Brazil and then to the States for two months. He graciously allowed me to stay in his house for the few days I would be in Nairobi. I enjoyed the opportunity to get some office work done while teaching at the Eastleigh church. (It was also great to pick up my clothes from the Shewmakers.)

### **Higher Education In Kenya**

In the early 1980s, my sponsoring congregation in American, the Eastwood church in Hutchinson, Kansas, accepted the challenge of overseeing the fund raising of a project that was an ambitious dream of Kenyan missionaries. They wanted to construct a large building on some grounds the government had given to the church in the area of Eastleigh, a suburb of Nairobi. The funds were subsequently raised and the building built. In 1994 I visited the building for a few hours

while in Nairobi on a brief visit. It was not until the trip of 1997 that I had a chance to both visit the facility and experience the dynamic program that was happening at the Eastleigh location.

The Eastleigh project was certainly an ambitious work. There were in June 1997 about 1,400 students enrolled in the many training programs of the school. Several trades were being taught, including carpentry, electronics, computers and mechanics. These and other subjects came under the technological institute of the program. Those enrolled in the institute also took Bible courses from the institute of practice ministry. There was also a program for those who were studying full-time to preach the gospel, though before one graduated he was trained in a trade that would allow him the opportunity to support himself as a preacher. This is one philosophy of missions that is needed in Developing World societies where full-time support for preachers is almost nonexistent.

This school was probably the closest the church had at the time to a school in Africa that was functioning in the area of a Christian college. In fact, those working with the program were striving toward the goal of registering the school with the government as a university.

This was the first time I really had the opportunity of being with this work for special seminars. It was truly inspiring to be with some of the staff during a four day seminar and campaign series in the evenings. The potential of this school was great when one considered the many thousands who had already graduated from the many technological programs.

While I was at Eastleigh there were many university students from America visiting and working with a campaign for six weeks. These American university students were having a great impact on the youth of the school. Some lasting impressions were made and several people were brought to the Lord during the six weeks of campaigning. Such was a good example of what American university students can do in influencing the young people of mission areas.

After working in Nairobi, I headed to the west of the country for seminars in areas where I had been before. In *Africa Missionary Pilot* I once wrote of a previous trip there.

## **To the West In Kenya**

Sotik, Kapcheramgoi, Chepalungu and Chebongi appear to be the reverberations of one who has just choked up on too large a bite of oatmeal. At one time even I thought they were only intersections of humanity in a country with too much poverty, corruption and roads burdened with too many potholes. But they were not.

After a month of seminars in western Kenya, Chebongi, Kapcheramgoi and a host of other locations, became designations of memorial marks on earth where great brethren lived and worked as our fellow laborers in the kingdom of God.

Martha and I first arrived in Kenya in April of 1994 on a bright Sunday afternoon. We were greeted at the airport according to Kenya hospitality by missionary Ken Bolden. After a body-compressing ride over the famous Kenya roads we arrived into the warm fellowship of the Bolden home. A month of speaking opportunities had been arranged and we were on our way again to an exciting month with God and brethren who desired to share their faith with the world.

### **Sotik, Kenya**

We were half way to Sotik, Kenya and at over 8,000 feet in altitude when I realized that I was not in our airplane. The chill of the African evening was refreshing as we joggled down an awakening road for the interior of Kenya. God's servant David Vick had collected us in Nairobi and was now escorting us to somewhere west in Kenya to his home of over six years.

After six hours on the road we pulled into what could easily have been a town situated in the romantic scenes of old Africa. A few things had changed since I had been there a year before. Buildings were a little more dilapidated. The gullies of wasted lands had evolved into even greater tragedies of bad environmental concern. People were older and recovering from Africa's greatest curse, drought. Everyone was a little more into the grasp of poverty's hand. Nevertheless, we were greeted by friendliness, hospitality and a desire to share one another's lives. The African truly has a great spirit of perseverance.

I had little time to recuperate from the previous day's road torture

when David was making arrangements for the next mornings' travel to our first introductory seminar. He had arranged a host of seminars for the leaders. When morning came, his wife, Brenda, stuffed our voluntary mouths and stomachs full of a better breakfast than we had eaten since the last time I was there. David and I then climbed into a 4X4 monster and were bumping our way again to some unknown place called Kapcheramgoi in the Masai regions of southwestern Kenya.

We arrived at a location where I still cannot remember. But in this isolated plain that was interrupted by a few rolling hills, faithful believers had assembled together to listen to what some stranger had to say concerning the Revelation of a God in whom they trusted in the midst of a life that had dealt them too many unfortunate blows. At the end of the day, I knew that no amount of supposed sacrifice I would claim could be too much to pay for the attentive ears of such a good people. We were into a great month of meetings and seminars because of some great people who truly loved God.

After Kapcheramgoi it was Sotik, Chepalungu, Chebongi and Kabchepwaber. These are words that may to you seem only like a scrambling of letters for deciphering in some word game. But to me they now bring remembrances of encounters with thirsty souls seeking for spiritual guidance in a dark and hostile environment of a world that has somehow gone wrong for them. They are names which identify patches on earth where I had the privilege of standing before great leaders of the kingdom. These were people who refused to let droughts discourage them. They would not allow the corruption of governments bent on abuse of citizens to stop their normal process of life. The hopelessness that had subdued those who continued to maintain a world view that was confined to this world would not dissuade these leaders. The locations to which we traveled were places where hearts of different cultures possessed the opportunity to encounter one another. They were places of opportunity for me to absorb the richness of what Africa had to offer in Christian love and warm fellowship.

### **Kisumu, Kenya**

From Sotik to the lapping waters of Lake Victoria was only a short

hassle along Kenya roads. As a week of work out of Sotik moved into the past, Martha and I were on our way to another location of labor. David and Brenda servantly deposited us into the most hospitable care of missionaries David and Becky High in a western city of Kenya called Kisumu. Kisumu is a cultural and trading center of western Kenya on the shores of Lake Victoria. We were there for a spiritual reunion of church leaders who had come for a week to a Passover feast of God's word.

David had arranged a week-long, eight-to-five teaching session for me for the principle leaders of the Kisumu region. This was a challenging session of mental encounter as I labored to verbalize in local understanding the philosophical arguments for the existence of God. This requested and most unique week-long session evidenced the maturity to which these African preachers wanted to aspire.

David and Becky had graciously planned two days of rest for us in the midst of Africa in some far off hotel whose name has long since vanished from a mind with too many appointments. It was a resting experience; one that was needed.

We stayed in this hotel that truly appeared to be a relic out of the colonial past. Martha was observing the uniqueness of the architecture and the apparent old age of the building. She asked David, "This building is very old. How old is it?" David replied, "It is three years old. I was here when it was built." Africa has a great way of building something new that looks a century old.

### **Nairobi, Kenya**

Nairobi again loomed down a distant road as we traveled toward a week of work in this capital of Kenya. We and the Highs both agreed that our week's stay in Kisumu was too short. There was too much to be done. Nevertheless, it was time to close a chapter on this part of our Kenya trip and open another into a scheduled week of activities in one of the most famous cities of Africa.

Martha was off to Tarzan country for a ladies retreat during our Nairobi visit. A place had been reserved for the Kenya missionary wives where Johnny Weissmuller (Tarzan) had jumped off a water fall in one of those films of darkest Africa. At the same time I found myself standing before

about sixty university students at the Day Star University in Nairobi. I was there as a guest speaker and lectured on the Wisdom Literature of the Bible.

### **In Kisumu, Kenya Again**

As stated before, the first and only time I was in Kisumu, Kenya was the preceding trip of 1994. At the time, I conducted a five day seminar in the Bible Training Center, and was back in 1997 to conduct another seminar. This particular seminar was on the subjects of Galatians and Legalism in the mornings and Servanthood Leadership in the afternoons. There were about seventy-five churches represented by those who attended the three day, 8:00<sup>AM</sup> to 5:30<sup>PM</sup> meetings.

At the time of my arrival on the '97 trip, Dan and Beverly Bell had been doing a very good work in Kisumu for several years. Dan moved into providing a much needed work of printing for the churches of Kenya. He printed everything from tracts to songbooks. He also printed the course books for a leadership training school that was based in Kisumu. Kenyan Daniel Makaja worked with this school that had over three hundred active students and was a much needed outreach among church leaders in western Kenya.

The Kisumu seminar was unique from the rest of the seminars I had conducted on the '97 trip in the sense that all but a few of the fifty-one preachers and leaders who attended were enrolled in the Cape International Bible Institute. It was good, therefore, to be with such a large group of students of the Institute. These men were also receiving courses from the Kisumu Leadership Training School, as well as the Institute. Therefore, they were getting a double dose of Bible study material.

### **Eldoret, Kenya**

Traveling through western Kenya is going to those places one has always read about, but never had the opportunity to visit. So it was with Eldoret, the home area of former President Moi of Kenya. For years I had heard of and read about the mission work of the many missionaries that were in the area. At one time there were five families and three or four single workers working in and around Eldoret.

I had left the Bell's house about 6:00<sup>AM</sup> that morning and arrived in Eldoret at the Oneal Tankersley's home in time for a hot cup of coffee. This was the first visit I had made to the area and the first time I had met Oneal and Betsy who had come to Kenya in 1982. I appreciated their great hospitality and the company of their four children, Becky, Glen, Karen and Karl. At the time, Keith and Grace Gafner were also in the area. Keith was working in agricultural development and both families were working with church edification.

Oneal and I were off at 8:30<sup>AM</sup> the morning of my arrival for an all-day seminar about twenty minutes from their house. The seminar was conducted in an area where there was a central church building that had been constructed in the middle of a densely populated area. We had a seminar that day from 10:00<sup>AM</sup> to 4:00<sup>PM</sup> on the subject of Servanthood Leadership. It was good being with the church leaders of the region. Though there are about one hundred churches in the area, we were able to meet only with those who were in about a thirty mile radius from the seminar. For one-day seminars, this is about the best one can do because of the great distances involved for men to travel to the seminar because most have to walk, bicycle or bus to the meeting.

After the seminar, the brethren said I must come back next year. I did not make any promises, though I sincerely felt that I should. I left feeling a great desire to return, but knew that Eldoret was a long way from Cape Town.

When I was in Nairobi I met some brethren from Sotik where I had conducted seminars in 1992 and 1993. Again, the brethren almost made me promise to come in 1998 for a seminar. They even gave me the addresses of over 120 churches in the area they would invite. I wanted to do the seminar but Sotik is also a long way from Cape Town. I believe the request of these brethren indicates that missionaries need to do more seminars for church leaders in Africa.

### **Mt. Elgon, Kenya**

They warned me about the road to the mountain, Mt. Elgon. But I had always heard reports of, and thus, wanted to visit one of God's great families and workers who lived on the side of this mountain. So

it was off to Mt. Elgon after the seminar in Eldoret and into the carrying hands of Fielden and Janet Allison.

I believe I extended the abilities of the Nissan 4X4 on a few exciting parts of the road up Mt. Elgon. The mud in one area was over a foot deep. Slipping around the boulders was an adventure. I could better understand that Fielden and Janet do love God and His work. If you do not believe this, you would have to take the road up Mt. Elgon to their house which was at the 7,000 foot level of the 14,000 foot mountain.

In 1990, Fielden and Janet were led by God to reach the Sabaot tribe of Kenya. They thus decided to plant themselves in the middle of the Sabaot area, which meant Mt. Elgon. Fielden surveyed the area. The government gave them nine acres of land on the side of the mountain, and there they built their house. Over several months they made the rugged journey up the mountain, hauling goods and stuff in order to build and stock their house. Since then, the ingenuity of Fielden led to the dwelling of a very functional house for their work.

Once the house was built, they set their hearts to touch the lives of the people. And this they did. Since their arrival on the mountain, they had by the time of my visit started fifteen churches and preaching points throughout the area. Janet directed a school for children. Fielden worked in evangelism and leadership training. These people were what missions is all about. They were doing a great work.

One of the great works the Allison's had done was touch the lives of young people who had visited them as interns from America. They had been the mission house parents to approximately thirty intern mission workers since they had been working on Mt. Elgon. Their influence, therefore, will have impact on many for many years. Some of those who had lived with them as interns were already working in mission areas of Africa. Such is a credit to the tremendous influence this dedicated couple had on young people who wanted to work for God.

In the States, Janet was trained in elementary education. She started a nursery school in 1992 on Mt. Elgon in order to influence children of the area. After the children were trained for one year, the parents begged her to carry on with training their children. One thing led to another, and at the time of my visit in '97 she had a school of about 350 children

up through the fourth grade. They had built school buildings. The government supported seven of the nine teachers. Through the school, the Allisons had a great impact on the farming community of the mountain.

### **Intern Missionaries**

In the 1990s Kenya was blessed with the work of more intern workers than any other single nation I knew at the time. Over the years, young people had come from America with a dream of planting their feet on mission soil under the care of experienced missionaries. Kenya had provided that soil and it provided the experienced missionaries. The combination of the experienced and those willing to learn led to the encouragement of many young people to be missionaries.

While in Kenya on the 1997 seminar safari, I was able to be in the company of some of these young people. Those I met were very dedicated young people from America who had a desire to serve God. They were sincere young Christians who had come to be touched by a people in a foreign culture who needed Jesus. I think it is highly commendable of such young people who have been the product of parents in America who had a dream for souls. In some way these young people were sparked in youth with an interest for foreign culture and missions. That spark generated an ambition to go forth, and thus, they have showed up in Kenya and a host of other nations throughout the world. Missionaries on the field should be commended for taking these young explorers in, for they go into the field to nurture a dream to do something for God. For this reason, the work of the Kenya missionaries during the '90s accomplished much in the area of intern training.

While on Mt. Elgon, I also met two South African young people who were there with five American young people. All of them were there with a project called "Youth With a Mission." They were with another mission group in the area, but I thought it was interesting to see a great number of young people working throughout Africa. The group I met was working in teaching in schools in the area of Mt. Elgon. These and many other young people like them indicate a great interest in youth to do something in a religious way in foreign cultures.

The young people of the church in every part of the world must arise to the occasion of world evangelism. If sending young people as interns will develop a spark of interest in world missions, then we must send forth our youth. Give them a chance to develop into world evangelists for God. Sending forth young people on six to eight week mission internships is worth a lot of mission education. Some things one must learn on the field instead of in the classroom.

I would, however, caution the postmodern generation concerning their “mission.” What has developed from the postmodern generation, and especially their children who are of the age to travel throughout the world, is not to lose sight of the mission of Jesus. There seems to be a rapid development of what is now referred to as “voluntourism.” A voluntourist is one who travels throughout the world to do good works, while touring on the side. There is nothing wrong with touring, but we must remember that our primary purpose is to preach the gospel to the world. We are not vacationaries. If we fail to preach the gospel to those for whom we do good works, then we have lost our mission. The problem with voluntourism is that one’s primary focus seems to be self-oriented. We make ourselves feel good about doing good. We feel good about the touring. But at the end of the day, it is about preaching the gospel to the lost, not touring the world on the back of the great commission of Jesus.

It is time that African churches become involved in sending their own youth on intern mission efforts. There have been a great deal of American interns sent throughout the world. But now it is time for African churches to arise to the occasion in order to preach the gospel to the world. I believe this is necessary if we are to encourage African brethren to evangelize Africa. This is happening among many religious groups. We had once converted a young Namibian who wanted to go into all the world. His world was to the Himbas in the northwestern desert area of Namibia. So he packed himself off to live among the Himba people to do his best to preach Jesus to a people who spoke a strange language. He was in his early twenties at the time.

I always admired Triston Jacobsohn in his efforts as a young man to preach the gospel to the world. When he was in his early 20’s he

asked his boss for three months off work to preach in northern Namibia. His boss gave him the leave, and Triston packed his tent and headed to northern Namibia. He found someone who would allow him to pitch his tent behind their house. He stayed in Oshakati, Namibia for almost three months, living out of his tent, and preaching the gospel. He certainly was not a “voluntourist,” since his primary mission was saving souls, not touring the land. (At the time of this writing, Triston, and his wife, Devika, with their daughter, were preaching in house churches in China.)

### **Seminar On A Mountain**

The leaders who sat before me for four days on Mt. Elgon were less than five years old as Christians. They were leaders of infant churches that were struggling to grow out of the usual cultural sins of Africa. I was impressed by their desire to learn, to understand practical methods by which they could lead the church in their area.

I challenged these new leaders with what I call “donkey evangelism.” Allow me to explain. Though African churches have little money, all the members have a garden. The Philippian church gave “things” in Philippians 4:18. This could have included money, but certainly the plurality of the word “things” emphasizes the fact that more than money was contributed. We have led people to believe that they should contribute only money. But what I challenged churches in several seminars on the ‘97 trip was to “pass through the garden” before coming to the assembly. They could, as several churches in Africa do, contribute fruits and vegetables on Sunday morning. The ladies can then sell the goods in the market, but most important, they can send a donkey load of food to the next village where they are feeding an evangelist and his family to start an assembly of the church.

The idea is actually simple and practical. An established assembly of disciples chooses a nearby village in which they want to start another assembly. They move one of their effective ministering families to the selected village as Aquila and Priscilla moved to Ephesus in Acts 18:18,19. The sending church can even go over and build the house for the evangelist. Every week fruits and vegetables from the

sending church are loaded on a donkey and taken to the evangelist. If two or three assemblies want to participate, they can be responsible for different weeks of the month. This is grassroots donkey evangelism.

### **Descending The Mountain**

I slushed through axle high mud and maneuvered over tire high boulders to get to the haven of the Allisons on Mt. Elgon. It was the same back down the mountain. What I considered a traumatic experience in overlanding, Fielden and Janet considered their driveway. I did not know whether to question their sanity, or sit in awe at their commitment. After being with them for four days, the latter was my unquestionable conclusion.

The Allison's work was serious missions. There are few pioneers left who would buckle on a mountain of lost souls and give their lives to such. Sometimes the mountain trembles and shakes the very strength of those who have accepted its challenge. However, the strength of the Lord had brought missionaries as the Allisons through struggling times in order to witness the power of God in the lives of men and women. With their faith they moved the mountain by the help of God. If you would be a missionary, talk to Fielden and Janet Allison.

In 2005 the Allisons moved from Mt. Elgon to do another needed ministry for Africa. Because God had worked with them in helping them to develop some great materials on marriage and family in the African context, they dedicated themselves to conducting seminars on the subject throughout eastern Africa. They moved their base of operation to Dar es Salaam, Tanzania and by the first of 2007 they were heavily involved in conducting marriage and family seminars, a great need for the African church. As "Lifers" for Africa, the Allisons have set a great example for the rest of us. They are truly dedicated servants of God

## **Chapter 21**

### **WEST INTO THE PEARL OF AFRICA**

I drove down Mt. Elgon, at times sideways, with mud slinging

everywhere off those oversized Michelins. I slid through pastures and trails in order to pick up the main road back to civilization. Fielden guided me through a pasture of rocks. I am sure if Nissan knew what their vehicle would be tortured with they would have laid hands on it with a special prayer before they let it out of the factory.

I carried some good memories with me off Mt. Elgon. There were sweet recollections of the Allisons and their work that I savored on to Uganda. I thus drove south from Mt. Elgon in order to cross the Kenya/Uganda border, and then head north to Mbale. Actually, I was going to the other side of Mt. Elgon, the side that was in Uganda.

It was only about an hour and a half from the border to Mbale. I stopped for a brief visit at the house of Shawn and Linda Tyler in order to introduce myself and relieve them of some of their gracious dinner. I then headed for Ngora to the north. It was an isolated area where there were some disciples about whom I knew little.

### **Somewhere West Of Uganda**

I was supposed to meet one of the students of the Institute at the Ngora post office in order to be guided to his house that was somewhere west of Ngora in the bush. He had arranged a seminar for me in the bush west of the city with some of the church leaders in the Aciisa District. Unfortunately, he had left the post office by the time of my arrival, but gave a message to the postmaster that he would be back sometime in the afternoon. I arrived in the early afternoon and waited for two hours. The postmaster was so gracious that he found someone in this one-donkey town to take me to the preacher's house. So off we went west of Ngora into the bush.

As we meandered down this small road headed due west, it was good fortune that brought us into contact with the preacher who was on his bicycle on his way back to town. From our place of encounter, we left the road and went about another mile into the bush and came upon his humble dwelling somewhere in the central regions of Uganda. I had finally arrived again at one of those locations that is not on the map.

I stayed in an old house that had been built in the early 1950s. There were only four wooden chairs as furniture in the entire house of

seven or so rooms. It looked like one of those houses that had been deserted for at least two decades and had subsequently been turned over to mother nature for dilapidation back to the bush. I was looking around at some of the unique holes in the walls and wondered about their unusual pattern. Sure enough, they were bullet holes. I wondered what history this house had experienced during the Uganda war in this area. I was somewhat comforted when I saw spider webs in some of the holes. They had been there a long time.

This was the country of Idi Amin who relentlessly slaughtered tens of thousands of Ugandans during his insane carnage in the 1970s. The country had healed marvelously and the economy was experiencing a tremendous growth. In 1996 it had an 8.5 percent GNP. Under the government at the time, things were going well as the country continued to be one of the fastest growing economies of Africa. If things continued, Uganda would be a success story of Africa.

One has all sorts of experiences with brethren in the African bush. It was about 5:30 in the evening when I finally arrived at the location of the seminar west of Ngora. I as in my room, content to call it a day. However, a brother knocked at the door of my room, bringing in a roasted ear of corn (maize). I like this type of thing, for it makes a sufficient meal for me. One can just sit back and gnaw and chew away at this little delicacy. It is simply an ear of corn that is thrown into the hot ashes and allowed to cook and brown for a few minutes. After washing off the ashes, you eat it straight off the cob. It's good.

I finished off the roasted ear of corn and felt full. I laid back about 8:30<sup>PM</sup> in the dark and said enough is enough and dozed off to sleep. I shuffled a little about 10:30<sup>PM</sup>, opened one eye, and there were about five brothers and sisters with a candle, just standing there, wondering who was going to wake me. Each one had a dish of food for my main course for the evening. What could I say? There was chicken and rice and millet and pasta and maybe something else. After the meal I was thoroughly stuffed, to the point of being uncomfortable.

I then laid back, thinking that surely I can call it a day and get some sleep. Not so fast. At about 11:30<sup>PM</sup> the brethren came in and asked to have a devotional before going to bed. I believe it was around

12:30<sup>AM</sup> before I finally hit the bed and fell under the attack of the worst case of mosquitoes I had on the entire trip. It was a struggle all night. I really do not believe I was supposed to sleep that night. Between brethren and mosquitoes, I am sure I did not sleep more than an hour. It was not one of my best nights.

### **African Wars**

After some conversation during the night hours, I understood where those bullet holes originated. Between 1986 and 1992 the region around Ngora was engaged in a heated war between the Uganda military and a rebel force of the area that took up arms to stop “government soldiers” from looting their property. Common farmers of the area had come to the end of their tolerance with looters who were either from the military or bandits dressed in military clothes. They thus formed a rebel group to fight off the constant raids of their homes.

The war raged back and forth for four or five years until the government depopulated the region by placing all residents in concentration camps in towns as Ngora. Everyone was taken from the countryside of the area and placed in camps where disease ravaged the people from one camp to another. One brother said they lived like animals for the government made no provision for the camps. The deaths were intolerable until the Red Cross came and set up some facilities for sanitation and began medical programs for the sick.

Everyone who stayed in the countryside after the depopulation of the area was shot on sight. The government swept through the area and cleaned out the countryside. The shell of a house in which I stayed, as well as all such houses, were stripped clean and almost demolished. All huts of the region were destroyed or damaged in some way. The government initiated a strip and burn policy in order to destroy all rebel resistance. They eventually accomplished their goal and peace finally came to the area. When I was there, the people were still putting their lives back together. The drought that occurred the year before I was there did not help the situation. Nevertheless, Africans who do not die during such ordeals have a resilience to struggle on. And so they were struggling on in the countryside of Ngora.

## Ngora

For the Ngora seminar, we crouched under this thatched roof which composed the shell of a church building that had been constructed by the local members. It was the only church building in fifteen miles. Some who were present had come from forty to fifty miles away to attend the seminar. One of the visiting preachers was physically sick, suffering the final stages of AIDS. Another attendee was sick in bed with malaria during the entire meeting. So it went. Africa is a hostile environment in some places. During most of the seminars I conduct in Africa there are always those who are physically sick. I have always believed that these brethren are special. They come to the seminars in their sicknesses and go home sick, but spiritually fed. Africans are tough.

I must tell you the story that was related to me by Phil Kruger, a former real estate dealer in South Africa. Several years ago he worked in a rural post office in a small South African village. Many of the husbands of the village worked in the gold mines of South Africa, and thus had to send money back to their wives who stayed in the villages. The mail normally arrived on Tuesday with the letters and money from the husbands for the wives. Phil said that if he had not experienced one case of a wife coming for her money, he would not have believed it. The wife arrived on Tuesday after walking twenty-five miles to the post office. Unfortunately, the letter with her money from her husband had not arrived. Phil said he apologized because he knew the very poor young wife desperately needed the money. As Phil explained to her that he was sure the letter would arrive in the next delivery on Thursday, a tear flowed down her cheek. Phil also saw that she was with child.

So the young wife turned around and walked twenty-five miles back home. On Thursday, she walked twenty-five miles back to the post office. Sure enough, the letter had arrived. Phil gave her the letter that included the money for her husband. The young wife started to leave the post office when Phil said he heard the whimper of a baby. The young mother proudly unveiled her newly born baby which she had given birth to from the time she left the post office on Tuesday

evening to the time she arrived on Thursday afternoon after walking to and from for fifty miles. African women are strong.

### **Village Life**

Something that is inconceivable to the Western mind is the village life in Africa. Imagine for a moment that you live on a small parcel of land of one to five acres. You have no radio. You have no access to newspapers. There are no books in your house. There is no electricity, no flashlights, and no communication with the outside world. There are no games, no activities of the community, nothing other than to prepare food and work the land with your hands. When the seed is planted and the harvest is over, the land needs little attention, so what do you do? You say this would drive you crazy? The activity oriented Western mind would certainly have a hard time in the African village. I do know, however, that the African village dweller has time for prayer, Bible study, daily worship, teaching and preaching. There is nothing else to do and nothing to divert one's attention away from what is most important in life.

In *African Mission Pilot* I once wrote of my concept of the African village from the viewpoint of a Western cultured person.

One grudgingly bumps along a never-repaired trail somewhere in the bush of central Africa. The pothole-ridden road tortures an unfortunate vehicle that was probably never meant to endure such maltreatment. The so-called road meanders through trees and shrubs, rivers and valleys. You idle through a host of unnamed villages. Friendly glances and spontaneous waves arise from village children until you come to your destined hamlet in the bush. Instant grins depict an untarnished naïve friendliness which is often forgotten by the desensitized personality of the Western/business industrial culture. But this is Africa and you feel welcomed. This is the untouched bush village; the dwelling of innocence bypassed by a frantic world deceived into thinking that development means happiness; prosperity and ownership mean high personal character. But forget all that. Welcome to yesteryear. You are in the African village.

A calmness sweeps through your soul as you park your modern ve-

hicle of transport. Immediately one begins to experience the refreshing air of something for which he has always yearned. One's mind and emotions are swept clean of his first world environment of activity, and schedules, of appointments and meetings. You catch your breath and relax a million tensions. You have entered a twilight zone, a time that stops, a world forgotten by the passing world of misguided civilization. The rustle and noise of metal and machine have now given way to the giggles and curious chatter of a cluster of half-clothed young fans who have gathered around to welcome you as a long lost family member back into their time. Yes, you have stepped out of a time machine and entered a small portion of existence that time has passed by.

Somehow the chaotic world of one's padded cultural cell of the Western business/industrial world seems a million eons away now. A quietness is here. A calm after the storm. A sense of welcome from a culture that is delightfully excited that you have come. The warm greetings by children and chiefs alike carry with them a sincerity you have always wanted to have existed but really did not know where to find it. You have just made a fantastic discovery.

The hours unconsciously pass by as communication ventures into the spiritual matters of life. An evening fire is stoked as an African-illuminated red sun slithers over the western horizon. Casual discourse is not the rapid fire statement-response frenzy of the activity-oriented world from which you have just escaped. A statement here. A silence. A response. Time is a forgotten entity which has never haunted this conclave of timelessness. There is a casual easiness with an alert laidback atmosphere that eagerly compels you to throw it in neutral and coast. You wonder if it is OK to be slow, to not feel guilty about not having to accomplish so much. Could God actually be pleased with this pre-industrial slow motion of the human spirit that existed for millennia before the invention of the wheel? Could this be the way it should be?

Faith seems so natural here. Bred out of centuries of superstition, a religious inclination has been born that provides fertile soil for the true message. You sit among inquisitive souls that ingest every drop of spiritual milk. They listen. They ponder. They inquire. As in all places there is a spiritual desert here that must be sprinkled with the life-giving water

of Life. And as the splash of new born babes sounds forth from a nearby convenient river you realize that Paul must have passed by a similar neighboring village only yesterday. You sense a first century culture in a twentieth century time zone. You understand why there is such splendid receptivity here. God does not have to compete with a host of temporal things and machines and activities. Inhabitants here have time for God, for prayer, for meditation. There are no ball games, no television sets, no cheerleading practices, no competition with the spiritual, and above all, no internet diversions. The local inhabitants reason that if they have to pass up their God on the way to the top, then they would just as well stay close to God at the bottom.

One dips his hand into a communal bowl of whatever, asks no questions, and eats with pleasant thanksgiving amongst those who are now more than friends. There are no extraordinary spices in this dish, no sauces, no supermarket cuisine that tarnishes the naturalness of the prepared meal. The everyday eating of a corn meal pie is accepted with as much gratefulness as a grilled fillet. The residents here would never know, however, having never touched their lips to the delicacies of refined foods. But the naturalness, the commonality of the meal, reflects the unassuming culture. Life is not cluttered with demanding schedules and appointments, deadlines and dues. You have entered a time absent from calendars and watches.

The cool evening night is now upon you. You do not miss the sirens and chaotic traffic noises and irritations of a world you now faintly remember. Creatures of the night here make the mellowing chirps and cheeps which remind you that there was once a garden on earth similar to this. You are overcome by the pleasantness of the summer evening as you evidence more stars sparkle across the canopy of heaven than you have ever seen before in your life. You reason that if the bottom of heaven looks like this, how beautiful the top must be.

A grass mat has been lovingly provided and graciously accepted. Under the canopy of a smoke-stained thatched roof one rests his cleared head back in quiet meditation, wondering if heaven might be just over the next mountain. A curious sensation passes through you. Where has gone the tension? Where is the headache? The nervous stomach? No, no aspirins

tonight, no antacids, nothing, not even a glass of milk. Sleep is natural now.

It is easy to pray. One feels close to the creation and the Creator. The myriad of thought waves are gone that too often clutter one's mind and compete for God's time. Communication with the Father flows unencumbered from a cleared mind that is deeply grateful for this brief moment of the way it should be.

You snuff out a candle. As you roll over and cuddle for a few hours of tranquillity, a brief thought quickly flutters through your mind and you vaguely remember a place from which you may have come. You dismiss the thought and somber off into dream land, or maybe you are already there.

### **Mbale, Uganda**

It was one of those beautiful Sunday afternoons when I drove out of the bush in Aciisa for Mbale. I had completed a Sunday morning of teaching, and now it was on to Mbale for another seminar that had been arranged to begin on Monday.

It was good to be back at the house of Shawn and Linda Tyler, who were in two weeks on their way to the States for furlough. Ian and Denetta Shelburne had moved to Mbale a year before and David and Brenda Vick had just arrived from Kenya.

Shawn and Linda gave the first thirteen years of their mission life to the work in Kitale, Kenya. After helping to establish the church there with a team of missionaries, they moved to Mbale. They had been in Mbale about two and a half years when I arrived.

Ian and Denetta had been in Mbale for one year by 1997. Ian is the son of B. Shelburne who started the Namikango Mission in southern Malawi in the early 1960s. Ian also worked there for several years before moving to Mbale.

David and Linda had spent ten years in Sotik, Kenya before moving to Mbale. They were unpacking and trying to get settled when I arrived in order to begin a new work among people on the western side of Mt. Elgon.

Sandi Piek was also in Mbale at the time of my arrival. She was a

single worker who was working with the women and had been in Mbale for a little over a year.

The Mbale team was thus composed of some very talented workers. All had special qualities that make for a good team. Though all these workers have since moved on to other areas, it will be interesting to see the growth of the eastern Uganda work that these original servants started.

### **Missionary Resettlement**

I believe the Mbale missionaries exemplify what needs to be done more in missions throughout the world. What the Tylers, Vicks and Shelburnes have done as missionaries must receive special notice and commendation. All three families did initial mission work in other regions or countries before they came to Mbale. After their work was accomplished in the initial country of mission work, they migrated to a new mission work and started the process of initiating a work all over again. The Tylers first worked in Kitale, Kenya, the Vicks in Sotik, Kenya and the Shelburnes in Thondwe, Malawi. After accomplishing their works in those areas, they decided to move on to begin new mission works in new areas instead of moving back to the States. They resettled their families and started to learn the language of the people surrounding Mbale. Men and women who feel a deep calling of God to evangelize the world do things like this. They are examples who have set models to be followed by those who would give themselves to the world for the sake of the cross.

I would add to the above comments my commendation of those sponsoring churches who have the wisdom and foresight to stand behind missionary families who transition from one work to another, from one nation to another. These are truly missionary oriented churches who understand what worldwide evangelism is all about. May God increase their number as world evangelists go about preaching the gospel in one region and then moving on to another to do the same.

I appreciated the great opportunity of enjoying the hospitality of the Vick family while in Mbale. David, Brenda, and their three children, Josiah, Bethany and Rachel, are the epitome of a fine Christian

family. It was certainly pleasant to be in the company of a family that God had touched. The Vick family was the model family that needed to be on a continent where families needed examples to follow. David and Brenda, and others like them, were setting wonderful examples for a continent that needs to see godly families in action.

### **Rebirth Of The Church**

At the time of my arrival in Uganda in '97 there was a rebirth of the church going on in the nation. This was one of the exciting aspects I experienced with the Mbale and Jinja seminars. One could see such in the sparkle of enthusiasm that was radiated from the spirit of young church leaders who wanted to get busy for God and evangelize their areas. Winston Churchill called Uganda the "pearl of Africa." I believed at the time that in a few years we would be able to say this about the growth of the church in this nation. The Pearl of Great Price was being discovered by a host of people who were sincere about godliness and the spirit of Christian love.

The nation of Uganda had had its struggles in the past. The church had also had its struggles. However, those days have passed and there are great things over the horizon as the rebirth of the church catches on and spreads through the entire nation.

Twenty-two churches were represented at the Mbale seminar by the fifty-three who were present. Fifteen churches were represented by the Jinja seminar by the approximately fifty-five who were present. Our subject of study for both seminars was New Testament Evangelistic methods for the churches. When witnessing the receptivity of a group in a seminar to a particular idea, I am always anxious about what the results will be. Unfortunately, I am usually not around to see results. Seminar speakers should plan a trip to revisit all the places where seminars were conducted in order to see what God does among the churches through the power of His word via their teaching. It seems that this was one important practice of Paul (See At 14:21,22; 15:36).

I have mentioned before that I conducted several seminars as New Testament Evangelistic Methods or Church Missions. What I have done through the years is to assimilate from a study of the New Testa-

ment, practical evangelistic or mission methods that were used by God's evangelists in the first century. I have used these behavioral patterns of life in discipleship training in order to motivate church leaders to lead in the same direction as the New Testament disciples. This subject is particularly effective in Africa because African brethren have only one textbook, the Bible. They enjoying studying the Bible in order to discover the practical application of Christianity.

Any teaching that does not use the Bible as a textbook may be good, but it will not be researched after the teacher leaves. Those who would do seminars in Africa, therefore, must learn expository teaching. It is good to leave the outlines at home and use the outline of the text of the Bible. By doing this, the brethren can go home and read the textbook over and over in order to review what was discussed during the seminar.

Another hint in the teaching of Africa is to understand that Africans in the rural settings still receive learning in schools through their ears and sight. Even in rural public schools there are few textbooks to see and read words. Words on paper, therefore, are not the common means of communicating information. Information is communicated through the spoken word, and illustrated through stories. If you would be a great communicator in Africa, leave the written outlines at home and learn to tell a good story. Bible teachers would do well to learn expository teaching through a system of telling stories. This is the educational system of reading between the lines of the biblical text in story telling in order to make Bible information jump off the page. I think Jesus tried to teach us this educational system by His use of parables.

### **Jinga, Uganda**

During the 1800s there was a competitive race among early explorers to find the source of the Nile River. A man by the name of Speke won the race when an old Uganda chief took him to what they had known all along. But Europeans back in those days did not think something was "discovered" until some European saw it. And thus, they built a monument at the source of the Nile at Jinja where the wa-

ters of the Nile leave the southern part of Lake Victoria on their 4,160 mile journey to the Mediterranean Sea. So there I was, standing and gazing upon waters that would travel thousands of miles before they reached their destination, thus making the Nile the second longest river in the world. Sorry Africa, in 2006 the Amazon River in South America was confirmed to be the longest river in the world.

There was a great team of people working in Jinja. This mission team included Greg and Jill Taylor, Mark and Marnie Moore, Brent and Heather Abney, Becca and Deron Smith, John and Sara Barton, and Clint and Briley Davis. Except for the Davises, the original team arrived in 1994 to work out of Jinja to surrounding areas. There was one church in the city when they arrived. The one church was still there, but outside the area, and by July 1997, they had started eleven other churches and five to six preaching points.

One of the Institute students, Aggrey Grace Nyanga, planned the seminar for me in Jinja. Here was one of those African church leaders upon whom long-term growth of the church will result. He is a deeply spiritual man and one who is committed to serving God. He had dreams and visions of starting churches. He worked with Bible correspondence courses and used this means to reach out to start churches. He was a great encouragement to me just to be with him for the brief stay I had in Jinja. It is truly great to see men as this upon whom the church is being built in many areas of Africa.

### **Out Of Uganda**

At the time of my visit, everyone was expecting a fourth mission team to arrive in Uganda in 1998. They would be working in the southwestern part of the country in efforts to move the church further west. Uganda, Rwanda, and the Democratic Republic of Congo (Zaire) were all settling down from the turmoil of the past two decades. This was presenting a tremendous opportunity for us to move in and take the land for Jesus. As societies enjoy peace, the gospel is able to go forth. We usually cannot go where there is war. The stabilization of any region in Africa is prime territory for evangelism. Such is Uganda and the surrounding nations to the west of Uganda.

From five to seven years after a civil war, a sociological phenomenon takes place in the society. The civil war swings the pendulum of society to the extreme carnality of man. In Africa, after the war is over, the African forgiveness kicks in and the pendulum swings to the spiritual side of society. I suppose a good example of this is when the Rwandan government released from prison the former leaders of the genocide that took place during the middle '90s. This is not only an African sociological phenomenon. The spiritual restoration of America took place a short time after the American Revolutionary War. There was what was called the "great awakening" which was followed by a second great spiritual awakening. God turns Satan's work of war around by the spiritual awakening of society.

As I checked out of the border post of Uganda, I felt that there were great days ahead for the church in the country. It will be interesting to revisit this country in the years to come to see what happens. There are too many good things going on now that cannot be stopped. Credit must go to the first missionaries who had been able to enter the country in the five years before my '97 trip. They had struggled through a lot of obstacles, but they persisted toward a goal of establishing the church in Uganda. I thank God for such men and women, who through great spiritual tenacity, had at the time I arrived, had begun a great work to the glory of God. When we kneel in our prayers to the Lord of harvest, we must continually ask for the Lord to raise up great men and women who will fearlessly go into the mission battles throughout the world. I can never say enough about the sacrifices and faithfulness of such people.

## **Chapter 22**

### **SOUTHWEST TO ZAMBIA**

On many of my trips people would say good-bye to me in the evening before bedtime because I would generally leave in the early morning hours. Most of my hosts would thus get the departure ceremonies over before bedtime for I would often leave from 3:00<sup>AM</sup> to 5:00<sup>AM</sup> in the morning. So I quietly closed the door behind me on many

marvelous hosts as I departed at some early hour for the next destination.

That's the way it was when I left out of Nairobi on my way to Zambia. I was on the road out of Nairobi by 5:00<sup>AM</sup>, headed for three seminars in the country of Zambia, far to the south. It took me four days to get to the first seminar location so my first day of driving was a twelve hour stretch across Tanzania.

It was a fine day of travel. After clearing customs into Tanzania, one of the customs officials needed a ride on to Arusha, about eighty miles to the south. I needed the company, so in he went and on we went to Arusha. On the way, he wanted to show me Mt. Kilimanjaro, but the mountain hid herself in a morning haze and early clouds. However, when I was still on the Kenya side of the border in the early morning, I did see the peak on a cloudless morning as the sun began to sneak over the horizon. It was one of those unique mornings when there were no clouds on the peak. However, by midday the clouds were there and the mountain hid herself from all earthlings below.

I once worked on building and repairing roads back in the middle '60s. As you can tell from this book, I am a little judgmental of certain roads throughout Africa. I guess I am a self-appointed African Road Inspector. But I must give credit to Tanzania for their road repair unit around Morogoro. They were correctly cutting the edges of potholes, removing all spoiled tarmac and replacing it with new. They were then iron rolling it and finishing it by going over the surface with a rubber-tire roller. Quite impressive. There is still hope for African roads.

On the other hand, the repair workers on one Kenya road—I saw only one crew in five weeks of travel there—were simply throwing a shovel full of asphalt into the potholes and driving over them with a truck. The fill thus usually stood about two inches above the surface. What they did was simply invert the pothole. They now had a molehill of tarmac.

My first day toward Zambia ended in the bush about eighty miles west of Morogoro, just past the signs that read, "Danger, Wild Animals." I pulled out into the bush off the main road to an area that had been thoroughly trampled by a herd of some "wild animals." The dis-

tinctive aroma that such animals leave filled the air. The aroma had subsequently drawn a horde of flies that liked to bite. I put on a sweatshirt in order to defray the sting of the flies and had some relief until the sweat began to roll. So off went the sweatshirt and on came the flies. I christened the camp Flybite Bush Camp.

I had rationed myself all day on granola bars and peanuts in preparation for a good meal that night. So that evening, it was going to be the total spread. It was boiled South African potatoes and beans, savored with imported curried mince (hamburger), also from South Africa. This was evenly spread over a carefully prepared bowl of noodles that had been simmered in oriental spices. It was fantastic, even though it was right out of a can poured over a cellophane package of noodles. I am not a great cook. But who needs to be when someone has already cooked it and stuffed it neatly in a can. You should try it.

Because I had been pushing myself for over a month, I was in need of the quietness of a solitary place. For some time I had been going day after day and week after week in seminars without a rest. I was yearning for the nothingness of the Namib Desert or the serenity of the Kalahari. I kept promising myself that I would hibernate in the wilderness for a few days after the end of the last seminar. But that was still in the illusive future. This was the first time I had had time by myself in the evening since Ant Bush Camp not far from where I was several weeks before. I deserved the tranquility of the evening, the chirp of the birds, and the whisper from the wings of a low passing crane. It was even good to kick through chest high grass and slap a fly or two. There were no mosquitoes, just flies. As the sun brought day in China, night surrounded my cozy habitat and I let go a thousand tensions as mother nature struck up her evening African choir. It was one of those nights that causes memories for reflection in old age and stories for grandchildren.

## **Into Zambia**

After Flybite Bush Camp, I was on to the Chimala Hospital where I was treated with hospitality. Then after one night I was off, through the Tanzania/Zambia border, and headed south in Zambia for about

five kilometers. I came to the small village of Nakonde, missed the turn, reversed, and then headed due west on a dirt road I wanted to take, but later regretted. This was the Nakonde/Mbala road that lay along the Zambia/Tanzania border. I wanted to go this route to my next seminar that was at the village of Mungwi, just east of Kasama.

As I labored down this road from one village to another, I had vivid flashbacks of the Isiolo/Moyale road in northern Kenya. I had promised myself then that I would not get stuck on such a road ever again in my life. But there I was, relentlessly beating the poor Nissan and my body to death on some outback track that someone should never have placed on a map. These types of roads are traveler's traps and should be marked, "Foot path only."

There was one village after another. I suppose all the population of the area dwelt along this dirt road. As I passed from one village to another, I wondered how these people would ever hear the gospel. Who would come to this region of countless souls?

About thirty kilometers east of Mbala, I again received the call of the wild. There is a heavily wooded area of virgin forest just before you make the connection with the main road from Kasama to Mbala. Jump the ditch and head for the trees. Drive slow or you will destroy some unfortunate termite hill. I didn't drive slow, and thus, had to christen the campsite the Crushed Termite Bush Camp.

This was the most forested campsite I had made along the way. It felt good to be among virgin trees and unspoiled land that had not yet succumbed to the machete of locals looking for firewood. With the growth and spread of the African population, it is not always easy to find such a wilderness among the one billion people of Africa. But here it was and I was right in the middle of it.

I threw out my cot in order to fall asleep in the quiet of the evening with the stars gazing down upon me. I listened to the shortwave radio for some latest news of current events around the world. The newsmen announced that three people were eaten by lions in eastern South Africa as they tried to cross the Kruger National Park. I then heard a rustle in the bush not far from me. I directed my little flashlight in the direction of the rustling branches, but could see nothing. I laid my

head back again and tried to doze off. I contemplated being eaten by a lion, so it was sleep in the vehicle for the night. I should never have turned on the news. Actually, there were no lions in the area. I think.

### Lake Tanganyika

I had heard and read about the romantic Lake Tanganyika of central Africa. So I was up in the morning and out of Crushed Termite Bush Camp and on my way north. The drive was not far, but the grade was constantly down into the extension of the Great Rift Valley that reached even this far south in Africa. After about an hour of driving, I was there.

One of the most interesting stories I ever read about this lake took place during World War I. The Germans had a gunboat patrolling Lake Tanganyika at the time that was named *Hedwig von Wissmann*. The lake was then the boundary between the Belgian Congo and German East Africa. The Germans dominated the area with the gunboat, and thus, raided as they pleased along the Belgian side of the lake, and also the southern end that was in Northern Rhodesia. Neither the British forces to the south of the lake, nor the British and Belgian forces to the north of it could advance into German East Africa because German troops could easily be landed behind them to cut off their communications. This German gunboat, therefore, dominated Central Africa. It thus became a military necessity to the Allied Forces that this gunboat be destroyed.

The British commissioned a naval officer by the name of Commander Spicer to blow the *Hedwig von Wissmann* out of the water. So in the summer of 1915 they sent Spicer with two metal boats to Cape Town, and then, across the three thousand mile stretch of land from Cape Town to Lake Tanganyika by ox carts and steam engine tractor. The assigned British force under Commander Spicer traveled with the boats on narrow-gauge railways and barely navigable river waters, and through disease infested bush where they had to cut their own road the last hundred miles or so to the shore of Lake Tanganyika. They finally made it to the Lake, and sure enough, blew the German boat out of the water. So went the tenacity of the British.

Lake Tanganyika is certainly a beautiful lake. When I arrived there I wanted to jump right in, but controlled myself by paying only a brief visit, and then, scurrying on to Mungwi where I had to start another seminar in the afternoon. The problem with this trip was that I did not make enough time for relaxation between seminars.

### **On To Mungwi, Zambia**

I had met Clement Mwangi three years before during a seminar in Kalomo, Zambia. He had invited me to come and conduct a seminar in the northern part of Zambia. Clement's story had impressed me then, and after seeing his work, I was more impressed by the labors of this young man and others with him in their evangelistic efforts of northern Zambia.

Clement is the result of a Bible correspondence course advertisement in a Zambian newspaper. He responded, took the courses, and subsequently was immersed into Christ. Since his conversion several years before my arrival, he had helped start the church in the village of Mungwi that is not on any map, but is twenty-nine kilometers east of Kasama. You will not get lost over twice trying to find the place.

Clement is a farmer. He and his wife, Lillian, work together on land that he inherited from his father. With other men, he preached for the church in Mungwi and was a most energetic young man. The Mungwi church hosted this seminar where ten churches were represented in the northern part of Zambia. The church was relatively weak in the northern parts of Zambia, and thus, they came from great distances for the meeting. There was one preacher who came from as far away as three hundred miles. Others came from the north, around the Mbala area where there are five or six churches.

This was a great seminar, except for one minor problem. I was sick with malaria for the last day and a half of the meeting. The last day was the pits to teach. I sat slumped on my stool and ached with fever. That night I shivered like a conked fish while I put on everything I could to try and keep from freezing to death. It was not one of my best days and nights. I was not a happy camper.

The next morning I felt a little better, but was totally wasted be-

cause of the malaria. After the seminar, I headed south to a farm that was about three hundred miles on the Chipata/Lusaka road near Serenje. It was a farm that had been established by missionaries in the 1920's and 1930's. Tom and Lucille Waddill ran the farm at the time.

I felt very weak from the malaria attack, so I stopped at the small village of Mpika in hope of finding some Phansadal to kill the little malaria bugs who were wreaking havoc with my body. I had with me a preacher from Kitwe who meandered through the dirt streets of Mpika, trying to find only three tablets of the miracle drug that would bring me sweet relief. We finally found a small clinic, and thankfully, I found the needed three tablets. They went down the hatch and I hoped for the best.

When I arrived at the Waddill farm, the Waddills were not home, for they had gone to Lusaka. However, a South African neighbor was present, so he made arrangements to get me into the house. I want to tell you that I hit the bath and bed in order to fully recuperate from the malaria attack. The bath and bed were so great. I was never so thankful for a bath and bed in all my life. Maybe I was not born a hundred years too late. I can just remember even today that that warm bath felt like such a relief after the malaria attack.

### **Boer (Farmer) Hospitality**

Since I moved to South Africa I had heard of young South African farmers moving to different countries of southern African in order to homestead land and begin new lives in some underdeveloped African bush territory. By coincidence, I met Pieter Snyman, a thirty-two year old South African farmer, when I arrived at the Tom Waddill farm. By his broken English, I could tell that he was the true South African Boer (farmer), and according to genuine Boer hospitality, he invited me to come to his farm that was about fifty miles away from the Waddill farm. I did not want to miss the opportunity to visit one of these real modern-day vortrekkers (pioneers), so after a couple nights at the Waddills, off I went to the bush to the north.

Pieter and his wife, Ronel, arrived at their new settlement in May 1994. The land was virgin bush territory in the north central area of

Zambia. They had surveyed the land with Pieter's father and brother about two years before their arrival and three years before my visit. They, with Pieter's father and brother, made an appeal to the local chief for 4,500 acres of land each side by side. They received permission to farm the land, and subsequently filed for the necessary ninety-nine year lease from the government. Pieter and Ronel moved to work the land three years before my arrival. Pieter's brother moved to a city north of the area in order to market the produce that came from the farm. The father was staying in South Africa until all necessary supplies and markets were secured in South Africa. By the time I arrived, they had set up the farming work, marketing and markets in South Africa. What they had accomplished was quite impressive.

In the heavily forested area where the farm was located, they had in three years cleared about one hundred acres of forest land. They had produced two crops of corn, a crop of sunflower seeds, ground nuts, wheat, rice, different varieties of beans, a lush garden with all sorts of goodies, and a host of other things you would not be able to identify. It was truly a productive work that was carried on by people who knew what they were doing.

There was the usual assortment of farm animals roaming around the farm. There were dogs and cats, chickens, ducks, sheep, cows, plus whatever indigenous wildlife that wandered through the area. Just before I arrived, they had problems with an elephant that had meandered down from the north reserve areas. In order to have the typical African environment, there were also the hippopotamus and a few crocodiles in the vibrant river that ran through the estate. Except for these few African additions of wildlife, I felt right back at home on the farm in Stafford, Kansas, except for all the African wildlife.

Building was going on everywhere when I arrived. For the first year, Pieter and Ronel lived in a tent and an old Bedford truck. They then built a small hut in which they and their newborn son could live. They had since built a hut for dining, a hut for entertaining and a hut for the storage of their food. There was an outdoor repair shop and an outdoor kitchen. There were storage buildings for grain and implements. They were about three-fourths finished with their new house,

which was actually only an intermediate house. They would build their final mansion on one of the nearby hills that overlooked the splendor of the area. It would have all the modern-day goodies.

These people not only had the spirit of starting from nothing to build an empire, they had the dreams and abilities. They had plans for game ranching, a fish farm, macadamia trees, an orchard, a hydro-electrical dam, lumber and cattle. All of this they were carving out of a no-man's land of Africa.

These were real pioneer farmers. Equipped with dreams and knowledge, they had performed wonders in the African bush. Pieter was organized and had the ability to move his Zambian workers into performing well in a culture that demanded a great deal that had to be done. He had brought employment to the area and an opportunity for the locals to learn good agricultural principles. His presence in the area will be of great benefit to the area for years to come.

When I left the Snyman farm, I felt that I had been touched by the spirit of true pioneers. My great grandfather had homesteaded in central Kansas in the late 1860s after the American Civil War. Going to the Snymans was an experience of what it must have been like in those days as far as spirit and dreams go. The Snymans had all the modern technology behind them to accomplish their goals. They also had that spirit that was necessary to break new ground and begin their family generations anew as farmers in the wilderness of Africa. It would be good to come back in a few years and see what else they would accomplish. I certainly enjoyed their hospitality.

### **Lusaka, Zambia**

In those days, every time I drove into Lusaka I had the jitters. There were so many stories about the crime ridden streets of the city that one began immediately to tense up and cuddle his possessions when entering the city. I was confident that if Lot lived in this city, three angels would have probably showed up at this door with a message to get out of town.

Nevertheless, I was going through a police check about every twenty miles for the last 150 miles before arriving in Lusaka. Was this any

indication of what lay ahead? I came in on the Great North Road that made a junction with the road that came down out of Kitwe and Ndola. These cities were to the north, in the copper belt of the nation. Both cities were in the border areas of the Democratic Republic of Congo (Zaire). Because of the civil war that had started about five or six months before, the number of attacks on passing vehicles on the northern roads had increased substantially. This explained all the police check points along the way.

While I was still in Cape Town, one of the elders of the Chilenje church, Rabson Mhango, had sent me a fax of the directions to the church building. When I pulled this map out of storage before entering Lusaka, about half of the information on the map had faded away from the fax paper. This did not help matters at all. A few key roads, however, were still decipherable, and thus, with the help of a few helpful pedestrians along the way, I was able to arrive at the building.

### **Model Churches**

There were representatives from about fifteen churches present at the Lusaka seminar. The seminar began on Friday evening and continued through until 11:30<sup>PM</sup> Sunday night. These brethren know how to squeeze the information out of you.

There were some strong and brave brothers who attended the seminar, for they had to sleep outside the building on the ground, near a bar. The sisters were given the hard concrete floor of the church building on which to sleep. Africans are tough and dedicated. I always wondered how many people in America would show up for a seminar if they knew they would have to sleep on the ground next to a bar or on a concrete floor of the church building when they arrived.

One always feels comfortable around the brothers and sisters of the Chilenje church. They radiate a sense of hospitality that sets one at ease and gives one the feeling that a longtime friend has now come home. This is one of those environments one is always saddened to leave and to which one always desires to return.

The Chilenje church was doing some great work. It was one of those churches that was blessed with great leadership. They had a small

group outreach of the church that was seeking both to bond the church together, as well as, reach out to the lost in the community. They had several youth programs and community outreach works at the time of my visit. Since my last visit there two years before, they had started another church that was now seventy-five in attendance.

One of the most interesting programs of the church was a singing group of about thirty of the young members. This group sang at various times throughout the seminar. They were a fantastic group and one that had used the talents of the singers to glorify God in the community at funerals and other public occasions. This was one ministry of a local church that was being used, not only to edify the church, but also to evangelize the lost. The outreach works of the Chilenje church were a credit to the leadership of the church. While I experienced many churches on the '97 seminar safari who were not as active as they should be, this church was making an effort to be of service to their community. They were one of those model churches about which others needed to know and follow.

### **Namwianga, Zambia**

I closed out the Lusaka seminar on Sunday night, slept in my traveling house at the Chilenje building, awoke at 4:30<sup>AM</sup>, and was on my way to begin lectures at the Namwianga mission outside Kalomo that was about five hours away. I arrived at Namwianga in time to begin a series of lectures at 11:00<sup>AM</sup>. The seminar continued for a day and a half.

As I have said before, I am always amazed at the dedication of brethren who come to seminars. This was especially true of the brethren who came to the Namwianga seminars which I had conducted for the past six years. During this particular seminar, I asked the brethren who had walked at least thirty miles to be present to please raise their hands. Of the sixty who were present on Monday morning, about twenty raised their hands. Two brethren had walked over fifty miles to come. And one of these brothers was over fifty years old. Heaven will be full of dedicated men as this who love to study God's word.

Being around the Namwianga mission was like wandering around

history. The beginnings of this work go back to the 1920's and 1930s when early missionaries of the church set out in the area to start a school for the surrounding farmers. As I wandered by some of the old buildings that had been constructed by missionaries of yesteryear, history reached out and grabbed me when considering the prayers and sweat that went into making burnt bricks for houses, and classrooms, and the old church building of the mission. Those who first drove the stakes down here and dreamed what they felt God wanted, could never have imagined the tremendous impact their feeble efforts would have on the history of Zambia. They came into a century with a dream and it looks like their dream will be carried on into another century as faithful workers continue to labor with the Namwianga Christian Schools.

### **Out Of Zambia**

I left Zambia on a ferry across the Zambezi River. As I crossed over the river I left behind some good memories. I felt that I had time with the leadership of hundreds of churches. It was interesting to ask those at one seminar how many assemblies of the church with which they were working. One man held up his hand and said that he was preaching for ten assemblies of the church. Seminars have great impact when working with men who are doing such great works. Because there are some great African evangelists out there, the work in Africa is carrying on at a good pace. The Zambian preachers, as well as others throughout Africa, are doing a great work. However, there are many other regions of Africa that must be opened. There is a lot of territory on this continent that is about three times the size of the United States. As I left Zambia, I wondered about who would come to the rest of Africa. In leaving a nation, one always wonders what the future will be for the country. I prayed for the Zambian preachers.

## **Chapter 23 ON TO SUN AND SAND**

I concluded the Namwianga seminar at 12:00<sup>PM</sup> and immediately headed for Botswana. On the way out of Zambia I wanted to take an

old route that I had taken many years before. In 1991 I had driven through Livingstone, and then on to Sesheke over a road that brought back bad memories. However, someone had said that they graded up the old pothole ridden tarmac and it was now dust and powder. That was certainly better than the time I passed that way before, so on I went.

There is something romantic about crossing the Zambezi on a ferry. The river finds its origins in northwestern Zambia and eastern Angola. By the time it reaches Sesheke, it is a lazy river headed a few miles south to one of the greatest natural wonders of the world, Victoria Falls.

I had scuttled out of Zambia, hoping to reach Shakawe in Botswana before it was too late in the evening. I didn't make it, so I headed due west down the Namibian Caprivi Strip, that long neck of nothingness that gives the country of Namibia some connection with Zambia and the Zambezi River. I had traveled this way before, but tried to forget having to drive part way in the ditch then because the road was so rough. But that was several years ago, and Namibia was working furiously to put in a new road all the way down the Strip. At the time I drove through, all but about forty miles had been completed.

The sun was again sneaking over the horizon before I desired, and so, I started my usual slow and searching drive, looking on each side of the road for that obscure path that would lead me to some cozy campsite far away from civilization. After about two or three unacceptable possibilities, I finally pulled off to the north of the road into a field and drove about a half mile into the bush. It was a great spot. Again I had the esteemed privilege of watching the orange African sun slip slowly over the horizon for its evening rest.

That night I was awoken to the fact that I was now in the southern parts of the hemisphere at the end of the winter months. It was cold, very cold. I slept in my clothes and heavy socks, and huddled and shivered all night. Winter was not quite over in the south and nature was trying to tell me that I had been too long in warm weather. I thus christened the campsite Frosty Bush Camp.

All that night I hoped for the warm morning sun. I was comforted only when I saw a glimmer of light peek over the horizon. Just the sight of light brought some relief. I forced myself out of my cozy co-

coon in the back of the Nissan and started the engine in hope of generating some heat. I want to tell you that it takes a long time for a diesel to warm up. I heated some instant soup and poured it down to a frozen stomach, and wished for the midday heat of the sun. Don't let anyone tell you it does not get cold in Africa.

### **Shakawe, Botswana**

I had met Wimon and Rosalinda Walker in southern Malawi in 1991 on one of my first seminar safaris through Africa. It was a pleasure to meet this family, and now, it was even a greater pleasure to be with them for a seminar with the churches around the remote area of Shakawe.

The Shakawe work began in 1984 when Keith and Robin Honey arrived in this area. In 1985 Wimon and Rosalinda arrived with two other families to begin the church among a rural group of people who were separated from civilization. All the families settled on the banks of the Okavanga River, building their houses and setting up residence for the beginning of a great work that would eventually bring the Walkers as the only family still around in 1997. The Louis Vessel family had also done a wonderful work around Shakawe, but they had just departed for the States before my arrival. All the families that had worked among this semiliterate culture had done a fine work. Of all the areas I visited on the 1997 seminar safari, this field was the most challenging. These families who worked there need to be commended for doing a great work in a very difficult area.

As most missionaries in remote areas, the Walkers were home schooling their children, Martin, Marcella and Marissa. All three were the loving result of parents who were dedicated to the Lord and serving out their dedication through the preaching of the gospel.

While I was on the '97 seminar safari I saw many situations where missionaries were home schooling their children. Martha and I had done such for many years with ours. There are tremendous advantages to this system of education for Christian children. One of the great things that is obvious through the system is the great Christian impact the parents have on the children. Home schooled children grow up in

an atmosphere of love and care. The environment of their upbringing is greatly reflected in their lives. There are a number of home schooling methods available, and any missionary going to some area of the world would do well to ask concerning this great opportunity of training missionary children.

When discussing home schooling of children, those who send their children to a government school often believe that the home schooled children do not have enough social contact with other children. But this is not true. The fellowship of the church is where children interact with other children. Home schooling changes the often pagan environment of a government school for the Christian based environment of the church. Christian parents simply do not believe that their children have to be associated with drug users, smokers, foul language, dirty jokes and the indoctrination of evolutionary philosophy in order to be well adjusted.

### **Shakawe Seminar**

At the time of my arrival, there were twelve churches in the Shakawe area. All were represented at the seminar we conducted in the small town of Shakawe. Of all the seminars that I conducted on this particular trip, the group that was represented in this seminar was unique in that there were more illiterate participants present than in any of the other meetings. All of the participants were first generation Christians, many being only new babes in Christ.

The region is a farming area, and thus, all those who were present were from an isolated area of Botswana that would be considered the lowest economic class of the country. These people would have only one successful crop of grain out of every three to five years of planting. It is a tough physical environment. It is one where people live in a greatly disadvantaged situation where life is hard.

Shakawe and area is a tough moral environment. Percentage wise, at the time of my arrival, Botswana was supposed to be the most HIV infected society in the world. When considering the life-style of the people, one can certainly understand why. The Walker's work in this area was a challenge because of many of the immoral social standards

that prevailed throughout this area over the years. Nevertheless, they and the other missionary families had accomplished much in view of the tremendous challenges of immorality and economic hardships of the culture.

Another unique thing about this seminar and the nature of the church as a whole, was the fact that most members were older people. The reason for this was that the younger people were mostly involved in the world and wanted to consume their youth in sin before they settled down. It was a generation wasting their lives in riotous living. But so it goes in cultures where Satan has had a free hand for generations. The missionaries who called Satan's hand in the Shakawe area must be commended for their perseverance. The Walkers had stayed with the work and were doing a great job in nurturing Christians out of a hostile environment where it seemed that culture dictated too many non-Christian principles.

The Christians of the area need to be commended for remaining faithful to their calling. They did not live in an environment where many Christian principles were practiced by society as a whole. They lived in an area where Satan had taken into captivity a generation of souls. And yet, the faithful brothers and sisters of northwest Botswana were fighting the fight of the faith to this day.

### **Two Days Of History**

In the middle of nowhere in northwestern Botswana there is a small cluster of rock hills. The place is called Tsodilo Hills. It is a place where the bushmen dwelt in years past, claiming that the spirits dwelt in these hills that are in the middle of a vast territory of flat lands as far as the eye can see.

Wimon and Rosalinda took me to these hills with their family and two intern workers from the States. We enjoyed some needed time away. We climbed rocks and ravines. We kicked dust and grass. It was a great time of relaxation which I needed, for I had taken no days off for such relaxation since the beginning of the trip. Other than bush camp intervals, it was great to be a tourist.

I must say, however, that I think I gave the Walker's oldest child a

fright. Wimon had before we arrived told his children that there were leopards in the mountains. When it came evening, I threw out my cot and slept in the open under the stars. The Walkers slept in a tent. The oldest was concerned about me sleeping out there under the stars, so she asked Wimon, “Won’t the leopards get brother Dickson out there?”

Botswana is one of those nations of the world that is made of sand. If you do not like sand, stay away from this country. We drove for about two and a half hours at five miles an hour in first gear through sand in order to get to the Tsodilo Hills. This is one of those hideaway areas you must visit. And since they are the only hills in the entire northwestern area of Botswana, you would want to go there. I enjoyed finally being in a situation I did not have to arise in the morning to teach. It was a refreshing break, even though I had to clean sand out of my hair for two days because of the strong winds.

### **The Okavango River**

This is one of those marvels of nature that spills forth its fruit into a delta that has through the centuries brought forth a spectacular variety of animal life. The waters of the River first assemble from rainfall in Angola that is ushered into the Okavango through countless tributaries. The River meanders out of southern Angola, across the Namibian Caprivi Strip, and then into Botswana and its destiny of self-created swamps of northwestern Botswana. If it were not for the River, there would be no swamps; there would be no lush vegetation and the assortment of animal life that thrives off the river delta. After the Okavango waters reach the delta, they vanish into evaporation and sedimentation. This is one river that does not waste its resources to the oceans.

For a brief moment of relaxation one morning, I was treated by the Walkers to a pleasant boat trip on the Okavango. It was a moment to absorb and relish. One experiences nature in its own setting. And when it comes to providing a setting, the Okavango rarely disappoints the passing admirer. It was pleasant to meet nature on its terms.

As previously mentioned, I had been through the northwestern part of Botswana before. Six years before in 1991 I had driven through this region for the purpose of initiating a greater outreach into Namibia. In

the book, *African Missionary Pilot*, I wrote the following of that trip:

### **Seminar Safaris Through Namibia**

One late August Tuesday evening in 1991, after a special prayer, our Bible study group in Cape Town laid hands on Cindy, our daughter, Adrian and Heather Blow, and yours truly, for a mission trip up and through Zimbabwe, Zambia and Namibia. Adrian was preaching for the Bellville church in Cape Town at the time. He was one that related well with the preachers up Africa. Both of us also enjoyed one another's company in the bush. We spent many hours in Bible discussions and just discussions around an African camp fire. Some of the greatest times of my life have been so spent and in Africa in the company of brethren.

This was another l-o-n-g seminar trip through south-central Africa to conduct Bible training sessions for preachers and teachers in Zambia. I had made a trip as this before into Malawi and remembered how tough it was. Nevertheless, we were again off and on our way to conduct seminars for preachers and church leaders in this far away place.

It was a sixteen-hour all-night drive to the smog infested city of Johannesburg where Adrian and Heather, as South Africans, had to secure visas at the Zimbabwe Trade Mission for their entrance into Zimbabwe. We shuffled our way through the six-million populated area of this smelting pot of humanity and parked in a loading zone. We waited impatiently for Adrian to run for the visas. After some time he did not return. I went searching for him only to find him waiting outside the Trade Mission building.

“What’s wrong,” I questioned.

“There’s a bomb scare inside the building,” he nervously replied.

After a brief discussion he forged his way back into the building. We needed those visas. The panic subsided and he was allowed to venture in to acquire the necessary stamp in their passports. We were on our way. I must say that he was the only one at the time they allowed in to get his business done. I am sure God was working in this matter. Or maybe, it was just two persistent evangelists who were really being fools for Christ.

After another six hours on the road we finally pulled into a campsite in the dark at the border town of Musina in the northern most part of

South Africa. Exhausted after twenty-one hours of straight-through driving from Cape Town, we collapsed in our tents and expectantly awaited the dawn of another weary day's driving.

The next morning we were through the normal struggles of a laborious border crossing and on our way up through the western side of Zimbabwe. That day ended as we pulled into the Hwange Game Reserve late that afternoon. It was a peaceful rest in our tents that night, though a Cheetah had been spotted in the campsite just before we arrived. We had missed the great event.

Our body alarms went off at 5:30<sup>AM</sup> the next morning. As we were leaving the reserve area we spotted two male lions and a female lingering by the road, somewhat curious as to why we had disturbed their morning sleep-in. It was always best to rise early in the morning if you wanted to see game. They were often resting after the night's kill, licking their chops and enjoying a full belly.

When one is in the reserve areas, you must camp in a protected area. There is usually a high fence around the camping area, though this is not always true when traveling in the game reserves outside South Africa. A camping site is often marked by a stake in the ground which says "camping." You throw out your tent amongst whatever is around and camp. These are the best campsites.

If you are in a protected area, you have to be in the area by a certain time in the evening. The rangers will let you out only at the appointed time in the morning. On this particular morning at Hwange we were up and waiting at the gate in order to journey through the reserve and on to Livingstone, Zambia.

We stopped by a water hole for rest and saw what was one of the most amazing natural sites I had ever seen. As we sat gazing into the late morning forest we saw dust rising out of the trees at a great distance. Eventually, at the edge of the forest appeared a buffalo, then another, and another. Soon a black cloud of beasts were endlessly flowing from the forest to the water hole before us. Hundreds of buffalo filtered out of the trees with thirsty appetites for water. It was an incredible sight of nature to behold them swarm and encompass the water hole for drink. It was a sight I will never forget.

After another annoying border crossing at Victoria Falls, we finally arrived in Livingstone, Zambia. This city had been named after the famous European explorer and missionary, David Livingstone. This day ended in the home of Jacob Sianungu and at his dinner table of great dishes. It felt good to down a cool coke after a hard day's journey. Such luxuries are often enjoyed most in the middle of Africa.

### **Livingstone And Kalomo**

Jacob had arranged for Adrian to teach a week-long seminar in Livingstone. This was a Sunday to Sunday meeting, with classes in the evenings. Cindy and I thus left Adrian and Heather to continue our journey on to the Namwianga Christian School that is outside Kalomo, Zambia. This was about two hours on from Livingstone.

At Namwianga, Cindy and I enjoyed the fine hospitality of the Don Boyds and Fred Woods, two missionary families working with the school. These two families were doing a great work. At the time of our visit, Roy Merritt, the director of the school, was traveling. Roy was the son of Dow Merritt who had worked with the establishment of Christian schools in the area in the 1930s. Roy was doing a great work in carrying on the heritage of his father.

My schedule for the week was to deliver a short lesson to all the students and faculty in the mornings. After this, I would deliver leadership and Bible training lessons to area preachers who had come together from the immediate area for the meeting. My schedule went from 6:30<sup>AM</sup> to about 9:30<sup>PM</sup>. Though tiring, the great food that was prepared for us by the faculty and missionaries really made the work pleasurable. (If anyone wants a fine recipe for bread, they must contact Rita Boyd. She has the best.)

The Namwianga meeting was quite successful according to the estimation of those present. Those directing the meeting wanted to do it again the following year and invite more preachers of southwestern Zambia together for the meeting.

Cindy and I returned to Livingstone in order to conclude the seminar and meeting that was in progress there. The week's work in Livingstone resulted in seven conversions and twenty-five restorations.

When we returned we discovered that Adrian and Heather had had

some miserable nights of sleep. The bedroom where they were sleeping was located next door to this swinging disco joint that swung right up to the early hours of the morning. They looked a little starry-eyed when we saw them. They were ready to go to the quietness of the bush for a good night's sleep.

Saturday was a day off. We went early to visit missionaries Lloyd and Pearl Henson on their farm work outside Livingstone. These two faithful laborers were doing a fine work in bringing Zambians in to train them in a vocational environment. I was impressed with what they were doing. Five to ten students would work on their farm as they studied the Bible. It was a good arrangement. In this way brother Henson had maintained the school with the farm for several years.

While in Livingstone we also had the opportunity of holding our faces to the cool mist of Victoria Falls. Since it had not rained in Zambia for almost seven months, the spray from the falls was a most refreshing sight. The Falls are one of those exciting places to experience God's creation. When the Zambezi River drops into this natural cataract of over a mile wide, a roar occurs that thrills the heart of the most experienced adventurer. A fine mist is churned into the air which at times can be seen from over fifty miles away. At night during a full moon, one can experience a lunar rainbow. It is a spectacle of nature that shows off God's greatness in creating a world that should be enjoyed by all.

Zambia was a country that had suffered for twenty-five years from a Marxist political philosophy in government. When we were there in 1991 the economy was in shambles. One veteran missionary who had lived there thirty years before said that the situation was worse in 1991 than it was when they lived there back in their pioneer days thirty years ago. A sense of desperation had set in. People were hungry. Drought was encompassing the land. Elections would come up again in October of the year and opposition forces were saying that the hour had come to change the thirty-year-old rule of Kenneth Kaunda. If it had not been for the importation of "sanctioned" goods into this country from South Africa, this would truly have been a desperate country. We can thank Carl Marx for this type of situation and those power hungry leaders who adopted his oppressing political philosophy. The death of communism since then has

brought great relief to a great many people throughout African countries.

### **Returning Home**

We were not quite ready for the three and a half day journey back to Cape Town as we said good-bye to Jacob and the church in Livingstone. Nevertheless, we made our way westward over typical African roads that needed a great deal of repair. After torturing our bodies and vehicle for several hours, we arrived at the out-of-the-way Zambia border town of Sesheke. There was no bridge across the Zambezi at this point, only a ferry. I pulled our Toyota Hiace aboard this rickety vessel in hopes of fording this great marvel of nature. It was refreshing to be amongst waters in such a dry region. The sober waters of this dynamic river splashed with history as we docked at the other side.

At the time we were there, there was something exotic about this part of Africa. There was a sense of being far away, away in some hidden place of existence where one can escape his or her real life. God created us in a most wonderful way. He mentally made us to be able to thoroughly escape and appreciate those far off places of wonder. He created us in a way that we need “mountain top” experiences. And when we get to the mountain tops, we can thoroughly enjoy ourselves with Him.

After crossing the Zambezi we fueled up in the early afternoon and entered what seemed to be a deserted no-man’s land in those days right after the Angolan civil war. Civilization seemed a long way away. We began our journey down the long-necked part of Namibia called the Caprivi Strip. This was not a bad dirt road like some of those I had been reared up on in central Kansas. Nevertheless, at the time, and before its repair, it had a fine layer of powdery white dust on top which crept into every pin-sized crack of our vehicle.

We choked for about two hours down the Strip until we stopped for these two elephants that were crossing the road. When we came to a standstill in the middle of the road we looked out in the trees surrounding us and realized that we were in the midst of countless elephants on both sides of the road. A few of these mammoth creatures irritably snorted and flapped their gigantic ears at us. It was an incredible sight, or better, an awesome feeling to realize that you are so small in the midst of such great

animals. However, one wished that Tarzan was around just in case. It was not a time for delay. Heather and Cindy were squawking in the back something like, “G - O - O! G - O - O!” We thus scurried on . . . hurriedly. Adrian and I laughed for the next twenty miles.

### **Camping The Caprivi**

As the sun began to slip over the western horizon we were out there in the middle of nowhere, clogged up with powdered dust and yearning for some place to rest our weary heads. We passed a bush fire and were about to pull off the road five or six miles down from the fire. Cindy immediately explained with no little excitement that we were too close to the fire to camp. She did not want to awake in the morning to discover that she had been barbecued. Therefore, at a small clearing about fifteen miles from the fire we pulled off the road where Cindy spotted some type of wild cat that quickly disappeared into the bush.

We threw out our tents, creating a heap of dust and resigned ourselves to endure. Adrian went to work doing what he did best at a campsite, destroying some unfortunate tree for a fine fire. With the bounty of his chopping, he stoked the fire all night to keep away any unwanted guests. Cindy and Heather would not sleep in the tent, and thus, securely made their beds in the van. We had one of those tents you could zip up all around in order to keep out all those little creatures that sought the warmth of body heat during the cool of African nights. I made sure Adrian had it zipped up. I was not going to wake up with any slithering creatures in my sleeping bag.

It was a quiet night there under the African stars as we listened to the illustrious sounds of an African night. Memories are made on occasions as this. The roots of my true nature were allowed to retrench again for a few hours of tranquil solitude in African life. What a Kansas farm boy was doing there in the bush of central Africa could somewhat be puzzling. God can do exceedingly abundantly above all we ask or think if we only submit to His will. However, we submit at our own risk. That submission will land us in some interesting places. We glorify His name for using us as world evangelists.

Adrian and I awoke at 4:30<sup>AM</sup> and had our usual camp fire hot choco-

late. We rustled the girls awake and were on our way down the Caprivi again to the Etosha Game Reserve.

On the way, we wanted to stop by and visit the mission team that was working in the area of Shakawe, Botswana. We thus left the main road of the Caprivi Strip, went across the border, and down the Okavango River to the village of Shakawe. After getting stuck and digging ourselves out three times, we finally discovered where the mission camp was located. Only Doug and Gloria Loveless of the four missionary families were around. We had our usual English tea. Cindy and Heather were offered and gladly accept a nice warm shower. Adrian and I stayed African.

We could not stay at Shakawe because we had to hurry on to the Etosha camp grounds before it closed that night. Therefore, we scurried on. The road became more than rough. It was so rocky we could hardly hear ourselves talk to one another as we pounded along. We thus did the only reasonable thing one would do in such situations. We drove in and out of the ditch. Believe me, roads are bad when the ditch is better.

After three hours of dust-choking roads and ditches, we eventually hit pavement. Again, the sun quickly disappeared over the horizon as we neared Etosha. When we arrived, it was closed. Now what to do? We headed for the bush in order to construct a favorable campsite. Adrian grabbed the ax and went to work. I threw out the tent. Heather and Cindy said they would again sleep inside the van. We camped near the main gate of the reserve and again experienced another cool African night. As we dozed off we could hear the awkward laughter of a lonely hyena and the pleasant chuckles of birds of the night. There were no fences around to give one that sense of security from the Africa that still needed some taming.

## **To The Desert**

After a refreshing night at the campsite in the northern Namibia town of Tsumeb on the '97 trip, I headed due west for the Atlantic Ocean. This venture would take me through the northern extremities of Namibia and the city of Oshakati. I was headed for the Namib Desert. But a stopover in Oshakati would be an encouragement to the small church in the city, as well as give me an opportunity to renew my ac-

quaintance with some of the key members of this church, for it had been over a year since I had been with this group.

Since my last visit to the city, a lot had changed. I was impressed with the stir of activity and development of the city within the year. The city had grown in population, for many had moved back into the area for jobs. Buildings were going up here and there. New shops had opened. This was quite a thriving area.

Seventy percent of Namibia's population of two million live in the top one fourth of the country. Oshakati is the central concentration of this population. The Ovambo tribe of the area carries over into Angola to the north, and thus, any evangelism of northern Namibia will spread into southern Angola. There is a great opportunity for reaching northern Namibia and southern Angola that is present in the city of Oshakati.

I was hastening on to Cape Town but I promised myself some wilderness time before I hit the long catchup days that waited for me in Cape Town. I needed to meet God alone in a desert place and baptize myself in the surroundings of nothingness beside some sand dune in western Namibia. So from Oshakati I telephoned the brethren in Keetmanshoop that I was coming through, and thus, set up a meeting with them on my way through the south of Namibia. So from Oshakati, I just drove west until I would hit water, the Atlantic Ocean.

### **West In Namibia**

I headed due west through Ombalantu, and then, just nineteen kilometers east of Ruacana Falls—no use going there, there was no water—I turned south. From there it was about five hundred miles of dirt and sand road to Swakopmund on the coast.

About seventy miles south of the turn off from the Ruacana road, I turned right and again headed west into Kaokoland, to the village of Opuwo. It's the last speck of civilization before one crosses the desert to the Atlantic. I did not want to carry on with the westerly route from here for I wanted to head southwest to Sesfontein, an old German fort at the beginning of the last century

I did encounter a van load of French tourists at the petrol station in Opuwo who were in a dilemma. They had come south from Ruacana

on another route than the one I had traveled. Within fifty miles after turning off the tarmac, they had blown out three tires on the two vans they were in. They had to leave one van with occupants an hour back on the road and come on to Opuwo to find tires. I guess that is what one would expect when driving with a highly overloaded vehicle on the type of roads that were in the area. When I left, they were beginning a search in Opuwo for a couple of tires.

From Opuwo I headed south to Kaoko Otavi, and then, back to the main road that went due south to Sesfontein.

Sesfontein (six fountains) is one of those outposts in the middle of no-man's land where the Germans in 1896 constructed a fort. The fort was meant to be a control point for keeping cattle disease in check, controlling gun smuggling, and illegal hunting of big game animals. In 1914 the fort was abandoned and left to ruins. And being in the area, I can understand why they left the area. There is nothing there. It is a true wilderness of nothingness. A tourist group has since taken over the ruins and reconstructed the fort according to the original design. So at the time I was there, at least you could buy a US\$1.50 can of coke.

Sesfontein is in the area of Namibia called Kaokoland. This is the real untouched area of Namibia. It is an area of unique landscape structures as sandy desert, unusual rock formations and desert vegetation. On my way to Sesfontein, I saw the droppings of the most unique desert elephant. These elephants in this area have learned to survive in the desert. I wished I had seen one of the illusive creatures, but did not.

As I made my way south, the sun was again doing its thing around five o'clock in the evening. Therefore, I slowed down to take my pick of campsites from the host of desert choices around me. Wild ostriches raced across the road, then some Oryx. This would be a great place to enjoy mother nature at her best. So it was off the road, across the sand, and to a river bed at the base of two hills. This would be Ostrich Bush Camp in my mind forever.

The typical desert sun lazily huddled away on the other side of the mountains as I clicked off with my camera the silhouette of a beautiful scene. A full moon was making itself glow in the east in order to lighten

the desert night. I bathed myself in the tranquility of the location and settled back for a wondrous experience that God had provided with the simple command, "Let there be ...."

There is no way I can explain to you the serenity of a desert place where one can be touched with the presence of God. When God prepared Moses for a great task, He sent him to a desert. When Elijah fled from the threat of death, he went to the same desert. When John the Baptist was prepared to make way for the Messiah, he was sent to the desert. When Jesus began His ministry, He first went to the desert. Before Paul set out on his course, he went to the Arabian Desert. There is something about the nothingness of a desert that forces you to reach up from all distractions of life in order to be touched by the presence of God. You should go there, and stay, and fast and pray. It will change your life.

One of the wonders of Namibia is the Etosha pan area, an area that has been designated a national park. In *Africa Missionary Pilot* I once wrote of this unique wilderness of earth.

Etosha is a dry lake area that has been designated a reserve in very arid territory. During the rainy season, hundreds of square miles of territory fill up with water. Animal life flourishes. However, we usually traveled there during the dry season when one could look across the dry pan over the horizon and into mirages.

In traveling through this region on dusty roads, we stopped and saw our first leopard of Africa. These illusive and most aggressive of all African cats live mostly in mountainous or forest areas. However, as we drove down a road through the reserve, one of these stout looking and majestic cats crossed the road in front of us. I pulled to a stop and shut off the engine. The leopard authoritatively strolled by the van about ten feet away. It stopped, looked at us with a penetrating glare, and then slumbered off. I find it quite impossible to express my feelings about such experiences. While sitting safely in the security of a van one often forgets that such cats can make you history by just one slash at the throat with its razor fanged paw. These are not kitty cats for evening cuddling about the fireplace.

Leopards have been the most feared cats of Africa. They are the third

largest cats of the world, the lion and tiger are larger. They are alert and cunning and large enough to be respectfully feared. The male can be as large as nine feet from tail to mouth and weigh up to 160 pounds. Leopards seldom attack humans. However, after they have tasted human flesh they become more dangerous than lions or tigers. They are also unbelievably strong. Carcasses of their pray of up to 150 pounds have been carried up trees fifteen to twenty feet. They are definitely an animal to be respected.

### **To The Fairest Cape**

After my brief time with God in the desert, I was on across the Namib Desert to the cool waters of the Atlantic. I walked out on the old jetty at Swakopmund that was built by Germany in World War I. I looked out across the sea and thought of just having traversed Africa from the Indian Ocean in Malindi, Kenya to the Atlantic Ocean at Swakopmund, via Ethiopia, Uganda, Tanzania, Zambia, Botswana and Namibia. I inhaled the salt spray of the brisk waves and thanked God for a safe east-west journey across Africa. Now it was to the south, to the Fairest Cape and home.

At the time of the '97 trip, John and Marti Dalton had been surviving alone in Windhoek, Namibia for almost ten years. They had kept the faith and continued to serve God in a city that had not yet been evangelized. John and Marti have done a lot of evangelizing through their hospitality of passing evangelists. They had been a way-station for those of us who have been working Namibia the past few years. It was a joy to be with them again for one night on my way back to Cape Town. John was enlarging his house. He pointed to a certain location and said that was the room where traveling evangelists will stay. Evangelism can be carried out in many ways. John and Marti have, as Gaius, done much of theirs through the entertaining of evangelists on their way.

After a night with the Daltons, I was on to Keetmanshoop, Namibia. Peter Manuel in Cape Town had accepted the challenge to start the church in Keetmanshoop. On my last night on the road, it was a pleasure to be with the brothers and sisters of this small church. They were very hospitable and very evangelistic in their outreach in the area. I

was encouraged by their desire to evangelize the people in the area.

From Keetmanshoop to Cape Town is about a ten hour drive. I must say that this leg of my journey was not uneventful. I was about seven hours down the road when I felt a jerk in the Nissan. I did not think much about it, but I did wonder what in the world the jerk could have been. After some driving, I started up a hill and had to shift down to fourth gear. But there was no fourth gear. I shifted to third. There was no third. Then to second. No second. To first. No first. I came to a stop going up this hill with only fifth gear still functioning. I could go no further up the hill in fifth. All that was left of the forward gears was fifth gear. So I sat there and wondered what I would do as the cars passed by. I was stuck on the side of a mountain with only fifth gear and three hours away from home. And to make the situation somewhat more stressful, after two months, Martha was arriving from the States the next day and I was to pick her up at the airport.

So, I tried to get the Nissan going while in fifth gear, but the burning of the clutch plate signaled that this system would not work. I thought for a moment. I did have four-wheel low gear and two-wheel high. I also had reverse. So when all the traffic was by, I turned around and reversed up the hill to level land. I then put it in four-wheel low, with the main gearbox in fifth gear, and got things rolling. When my speed was up, I did a little grinding of gears, but got it into two-wheel high with fifth gear, and thus, drove the rest of the way to Cape Town. It was quite tricky at times as I had to judge the traffic and hills in order not to be stuck behind a truck on a hill, and again be stalled on the upslope of a mountain. During the three hours on the way home, I continually thought that if this mechanical situation would have happened to the Nissan somewhere in the middle of Ethiopia or Uganda, I would have been stranded for weeks waiting for parts to arrive.

Though I limped into Cape Town, it was great to see our favorite mountain, Table Mountain which signaled to all travelers that home was near. It was winter; the rain was falling; it was cool. But there is no way to explain how great it was to be back in the Fairest Cape after being gone for over four months across Africa and traveling over 22,000 miles to conduct thirty-three seminars. A traveling odyssey had ended.

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