

MOZNEWS

MOZAMBIQUE OUTREACH NEWS 1 NOVEMBER 2000

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October was really Jay's month. I took off to Brisbane, Australia for the Christian Outreach Centre International Conference, with key speakers – Business man Bob Harrison and Pastor/Evangelist Peter Youngren.

I had a great time and managed to speak at many meetings, showing our new video of the last 12 months. It is encouraging to see the compassionate hearts of people for poor countries like Mozambique, where lives can be saved for as little as 10 cents, and the good news of Jesus is received so openly.

But as I said, Jay took over the responsibility Mozambique Outreach, as well as the children, while I was in Australia having my first real shower in 12 months and my first break from rice in 335 days. So this newsletter is from the most beautiful girl in the world. Without her I would crumble.

Jay's Column

The theme of this month seems to be "testing time". We as a family have been tested and stretched both in our personal lives and in the church. You are probably thinking, "you think you've had it hard; you should hear my story ..."

Robbery

We began the month with two thefts in the one day, the first attack of this nature against us personally. It was a Saturday, and we were heading for the beach for the first time in a long while. On the way, Kyal wanted to buy some shoes for Kate. After buying the shoes, we got back into the Mozmobile, when suddenly the door was pulled open and a black hand reached in and grabbed the akubra hat from David's head. David leaped around to my side of the car, very upset, and told me what had happened.. Naturally the lioness in me rose up, and without a moment's thought I jumped into action, sunnies off my head and into the glove box (in light of the recent theft) and into the crowd at Chingamoio market. That was a mum's reaction, but not a smart one. Firstly, as you might imagine, I drew a crowd very quickly, being white, female, and in my swimmers (ready for the beach, remember?). This is a 'no no' here. A woman does not expose any skin above the knee. Well, we will never forget this white woman! Then to add to my irrational behaviour, I tried to converse in broken Portuguese to the totally male crowd, asking them where the thief had gone. Naturally they laughed at me.

" There are many thieves here all the time" I was informed.

"Yes" I replied in frustration, "but you all know who they are, and I want my son's hat back". Again they laughed.

I managed to single out one young man, and agreed to meet him the following Monday at a particular location, and I would pay him if he could retrieve David's hat. He agreed, and we continued on our trip to the beach despite David's loss and state of shock.

We set off again for our journey to Savanne, the beautiful beach trip that we had all been looking forward to so much. After ¾ of an hour or so, I thought about taking a photo of an eagle that had swooped low over our car as we drove. I glanced into the back for the baby bag where the camera was and noticed it wasn't there. Then it hit me that it, too, had been stolen, and the tears that flowed now were mine. My favourite things - my camera, my clothes, make up, Kate's clothes, all the essentials, had been 'removed' from the back of the car without our being aware of it. Of course, the biggest loss was the irreplaceable film in the camera with the first pictures of Katie the night she came to stay with us, as well as Baby Jay's first half-hour in this world.

Let me tell you, being reminded that I was a Christian and that I should be thankful that the children were safe, and that they were more important, and that my camera was not my 'god' - didn't help one bit. I was upset, cut to the heart and no one could fix it for me.

We persevered with our trip to the beach, although it was somewhat tainted by this time.

We never did retrieve the hat, camera or other possessions.

More Robbery

Now don't relax yet, the story has only just started. On Wednesday, a few weeks ago, we began home groups; three in total, all run by our Mozambican leaders. During that night our home became a target, and Greg had come face to face with an intruder in our kitchen. (This story was mentioned in last month's newsletter.) Well, that was only just the beginning. Since then our home has been made more secure and our night guards have a clear understanding of the ramifications of "sleeping on the job". We have had two more unsuccessful attempts since then, and one of the guard dogs met an untimely death. Our guard tells us that bandits are about most nights, especially at about one o'clock in the morning. Two tourists were recently robbed at knife-point outside our home at 1.00 o'clock in the morning, and stripped to their underwear. What in the world were they doing out at that time of night?

The logic is that just one item stolen from our home – the white man's home - will sell for a month's wage.

AAAhh Mozambique! Why would you want to live anywhere else?

Back to the more serious side of life. God answered Greg's prayer for a trip back to Australia, and off he flew. Ironically when I first arrived here, I told him not to even consider going back to Oz without me; but God changes people's hearts, and I was happy to let him go, knowing it was part of the Lord's plan: and I am very much looking forward to hearing and seeing the results.

Church grows

Our church has grown and God is blessing the people. We have 120 or so adults now. We still meet under the trees, but as the rainy season approaches (officially November, but in actual fact it began on the 28 October), we will have to put up a simple structure. Today, under flood conditions, I drove out to the site where we currently have church, and the site we plan to move to. The road to church was underwater. Normal for Moz at this time of year. The site where we plan to build a church was also extremely damp. The people here are using the land for sweet potatoes, and in order to do that they have to alter the terrain into hills and valleys. The valleys had become little rivers. Praise God, at least there is no water shortage.

We have a visitation program going which is very successful, and many people are coming to church as a result. As we wander in and out of little paths in the rural areas of Manga, we pass groups of children crying out "Hallelujah Hosanna". I have an idea of what it might have felt like for Jesus on the donkey as the people shouted out to him in adoration. It doesn't take long for the local children to follow, and we often have a pied piper effect, which in itself draws a look from people who are crushing corn or cooking Masa in their pots outside their little stick and stone homes.

Every week at church, we have people come forward for a salvation prayer. Numbers seem to vary between 10 and 15 each week. We take their names and visit them the following Thursday when we explain the gospel message in more detail, using Billy Graham's successful diagrams on the subject. They are also encouraged to join our New Christian Classes where they learn the basic principles of

Christian living. After 10 weeks of teaching we award them with a certificate and brand new Bible - presented at church. After this course, they then follow on with a 10- week Foundation course.

White Woman Takes Funeral

While Greg was away a member of our church decided it was her time to enter into God's rest. She was only young, around 18, and was deaf and mute, despite the fact that I had prayed for her many months earlier. The event took me and a number of our church members to a small town north of Beira. My plan was to visit the family and offer sympathy and prayer support. You must understand that it is traditional to wail for the dead here. As I drove the car to the tiny round hut, the wailing began. I turned to Kyal and David, and said "We'll just keep out of the way, let the family do their mourning, and we'll go for a walk." So we disappeared and I enjoyed chatting with the villagers, who were totally confused about a couple of things. Firstly, I was a fairly well-dressed white woman with two boys in tow and a dark skinned baby on her hip. Secondly, I was chatting to them in what I thought was good Portuguese. I was proud of myself for being brave in a foreign town, and because Kyal told me I had a light shining out of me because I am always talking to people and praying for them.

Then came the first blow. We stopped to talk to a woman who was having her hair combed. I chatted. She asked where we were from and Kyal responded with ONE word "Australia". "Ahh" replied the woman, "Son speaks Portuguese, mother doesn't!" I gathered up what was left of my pride and walked back to the wailing camp.

By this time the wailing had ceased and all was quiet. It was time to organise the coffin. I was prepared for this and trotted off to organise things.

Once the coffin was sorted out it was time for... what? I had no idea. I ended up in a room that one could only assume was a morgue, with a number of bodies lying around covered by sheets and flies and ants feasting. I quickly discovered that it was time for me to pray for the deceased - to raise her? I wasn't prepared for this, in faith or action. This wasn't the first occasion for me, but I was only there as a support, remember, not to do David Hogan out of a job, especially not on my own. I prayed a brief prayer, more crying out to God for His support and for Him to show up. The dead body was revealed to me. Unfortunately it continued to be dead. My heart went out to the family, who had been looking to me for a miracle. I had been under the impression that I was there only in a supporting role. But by this time it was becoming painfully clear that I was, in fact, the chief pastor taking the service - in Portuguese no less, even after the previous blow to my ego. Now I had to speak to a crowd of mourners at the burial site. The family were not Christians. I asked the mother if I could pray for her, and she replied quite emphatically, "NO!". Good start Mama Jay, way to go! Make enemies with the dead girl's mother. I decided to leave her to mourn.

After various duties had been performed (washing of the body etc.), it was time for the ceremonial speech. I was summoned to the grave-side by one of our leaders and asked to pray - "Mama Jay" and "speak a little" and "in Portuguese?" I questioned pleadingly, surely they would want to hear from someone else. "No. You speak please" came the reply.

SOME SUPPORT. I had my Bible open at Phillippians with a verse prepared. Yet as I flipped open the Word, the verse decided to jump off the page and into the grave with the coffin. It was no longer where it was 3 hours earlier. "What are you doing to me Lord, I am in the hot seat here, help!" I spoke what I could remember of the verse in my beginner's Portuguese, and two men kindly translated the message into two other local dialects. I was asked a second time if I wanted to try the 'raising' routine. What with so much faith in the place, there wasn't even a mustard seed lying around. An alfalfa sprout would have been more useful.

We turned to walk back after the ceremony was completed, and my foot slipped six inches into a soft pile of dirt. It was an unmarked grave of a child. I couldn't get out of there fast enough.

The good news is that I did preach later to some of the family members, and one gentleman gave his life to the Lord. How far this goes is up to the Holy Spirit. I had gone way out on a limb, and it felt like the branch was cracking.

So was my journey this month.

Even the Lord will be happy when Greg returns. His job will be less stressful and a little more sane. God bless you all, until next month, from the desk- top of Mama Jay.

SumUp

So completes our first full year in Mozambique. Apart from eating rice for a straight 335 days, we wanted to just do a small report on the year.

We have seen over 650 people saved. We have distributed hundreds of Bibles, thanks to your generous giving. We have disciplined over a hundred people through a 10- week New Christians Class, and they are presently working through a second 10- week "Foundation Course". These two courses really establish them into the church and into a program of learning about God. We have started 3 home groups which reach out to over 30 new homes each week, bringing many new people into church. We have seen outstanding miracles and many people baptised in water.

We have bought two blocks of land for both church and missionary accommodation.

We are training people through leader- training and advanced Bible Courses.

Our prison ministry has grown, so that the whole prison comes to our meeting – all confessing Jesus as their Lord and Saviour. All of the prisoners are fully or part- way through the New Christians Class. Many have Bibles.

The other prisons in town want us to minister there as well.

This coming year we hope to expand into other districts, and so multiply the preaching and demonstrating the good news of Jesus Christ.

It seems our only limitation to phenomenal growth is labourers. Surely the harvest is plentiful and waiting to be reaped.

God bless you, our faithful intercessors. God bless you, our faithful supporters. Without you this would have just been talk. But with you, God has made it fact.

Thank you.

God bless you

Greg, Jay, Kyal, David and Katie.

Photos when Greg returns. He has the camera.