

In the tracks of a missionary - Chapter 2

Our remarkable missionary journey continues, with the “tracks” along the way being somewhat extraordinary. After living and working in this country for over 21 years, the dichotomies continue to intrigue us. It is one thing to live and work here; quite another to develop trust and respect amongst locals. It is one thing to know God’s Truths; quite another to make them real and applicable to a different culture. It is one thing to understand being saved by Grace; quite another to help others understand the meaning of Grace in their lives.



Traditional Leaders’ Village Council Meeting

This country and her people are considered to be a “Miracle” - in a sense, and we understand the sentiment. We have seen the Grace, Justice and Love of God demonstrated in so many ways. We have seen life in its rarest and rawest of forms. Looking at events and understanding how Jesus Christ controls history, we clearly understand why and how this ‘miracle’ happened. Through the dark years of political unrest, South African Christians have been steady in their faith: We know that God honours those who serve Him (Jn.12:26). We have learned that Christianity flourishes more under adversity and oppression than in prosperity. The oppression of the past apartheid regime caused Christianity to rise amongst many of the South Africans. There was little justice in man’s laws – but always justice in God’s Grace. South Africans treasure their freedoms, but do not have unrealistic expectations or entitlements. The missionaries of the past saturated Asia and Africa with the Gospel, but left believers hungry for more. They want to know, “After Salvation, What?”



The Chief – uNduma

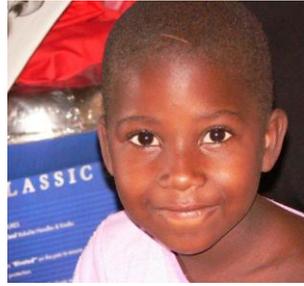
Classes have started up once again, after the Christmas holidays. Tom continues to teach at UBI, the seminary up in Hilton, and several other informal institutions, scattered across the country. The students most certainly have inquiring minds. Their desire to learn more is evident in their queries: “Does Grace differ from a European to a Zulu perspective?” Or, “What is meant by the verse, ‘Many are chosen, but few are accepted?’” Or, how does one not worry? Or, how can one know God’s Will?

Imagine! What a pleasure to teach such subjects to inquisitive minds. Others understand and accept Eternal Life, but do not relate it to Eternal Security. However, when God’s Promises are juxtaposed alongside His Essence, and when a question is put to them, “**Can God lie?**” They sit up and take note. The “light” dawns; their eyes open wide; and they look with eyes that would melt an iceberg. They absorb like sponges.



There are other observations into this “Dark Continent.” A friend said to us, “there is a bright light shining out of Southern Africa.” As bad as politics and crime may be - there is a greater Hope amongst Christians; an understanding that Christ did not come as a “political saviour” or even to uplift them out of physical slavery and destitution. He came to liberate Man from his sins, and lift him out of spiritual slavery.

Neither man, nor his promises have endured. Only as they embrace God's Truth, they learn that He provides where man fails. Hence, their deep desire to learn more and grow spiritually. Many South Africans have learned that spiritual freedom is far more valuable and more permanent than temporal freedom and human security.



The materials so generously and graciously sent to us by Berachah Church and RBT Ministries, have been invaluable! And the prayer support gendered to us by all of you, has been nothing short of a life-line and anchor. But above all, the teaching we receive from our Pastor, R B Thieme III, grounding us further, takes us higher, and gives us the priceless resources needed to continue in our Father's Plan. The benefits of all these may not be fully realised here on earth, but will most certainly be recorded, ***“not with ink but with the Spirit of the living God, not on tablets of stone but on tablets of human hearts.” (2Cor.3:3)***

On a slightly lighter note, this country is quite a marvel; a paradox of conflict and a vision of contrasts that manages to abide side by side in “relative” harmony. Grand, upmarket shopping malls, stand ostentatiously in



contrast to villages where no water or electricity are to be had. Not unlike the Samaritan woman who had to walk a distance to collect water from a well, these youths do likewise – carrying water on their heads, walking miles over dirt tracks, fetching firewood for their cooking and warmth. Still, they maintain an attitude of good humour, friendliness and remarkable discipline, strongly implemented by their parents.

The “Charges of the Mosquito & Elephant,” definitively taught to us by RB Thieme Jr., have now become real! We've faced-off on both. Elephants are extremely intelligent. They do not charge without first giving due warning – 3 mock-charges, unless highly threatened. On the other hand, the rhino which has exceptionally poor eyesight, and the buffalo which has exceptionally low IQ, will charge for no reason. The mosquito on the other hand, is far more insidious. One of Tom's hotel workers died of a mosquito bite (cerebral malaria) in the very northern part of Kruger National Park, bordering Zimbabwe. In telling his story, Tom equates the ‘charges’ of the mosquito, to the ***swarming*** Mental Attitude Sins - more destructive and dangerous than any malaria!

As missionaries, we understand never to charge into something without good reason. “Zulu Time” in Africa is considerably different to *Zulu Time* in the Military! With patience and humility we wait on God's perfect Timing!! And as the cheetah stalks with intense skill and concentration, we ‘track’ with perseverance and run the race marked out for us (Heb.12:1b)

The Journey continues: ***Tomorrow is another day! But we are not to worry about tomorrow as tomorrow will take care of itself (Mt.6:34)***

