

Kenya Trip by Bruce Thacker

This April, Sherry and I had the opportunity to return to Kenya to do some teaching. We were there in 2024 with a team from FAME and CMF. At that time, a few local leaders and a dozen or so local women attended. Sherry taught on women who encountered Jesus, and I taught on Stewardship and some Biblical interpretation principles.



100 regional leaders gathered, eager to learn

This time, we had 100 regional leaders and 40 women from various communities. As these were new attendees, we taught similar material as before. The teaching was well received. It was the same message I shared with churches in Zimbabwe and Mozambique. My focus is stewardship. It is my observation, shared with many I have talked to, that the church in the Third World does not focus on stewardship. They might take a small offering, or they might not. Many don't support their preachers, instead relying on American churches to meet their needs. It is my goal to change that. I want them to understand the importance for their spiritual growth and maturity to be stewards.

There are four elements to my message. I spend time discussing the things they have to share. These are Time, Talent, Personal Possessions (which is where I speak about money), and Influence. One of the major texts I utilize in Paul's request to the Corinthian Church for an offering for the Jerusalem Christians who are experiencing a famine. He uses the church of Macedonia as a model. They were extremely poor and suffering, yet they were generous. The passage we dissected is 2 Corinthians 8. [A special thanks to Dr. Basey for allowing me to borrow ideas for this section.] Another topic I address is the need to have "skin in the game." It is a phrase they were not familiar with, but I explained what it meant and gave examples. Much like too many American Christians, the concept has appeal, but we are still encouraging implementation into their Christian walks. That said, we have seen several churches step up.

We are returning in August 2025. This time, we will be teaching more leaders. There are 450 churches connected with the Community Christian Church. Many of these leaders will be coming to Narok to be encouraged. This time, Sherry and I will be talking about marriage and spiritual formation. Our host figures that since we have been married 53 years, we ought to know something about it. We are excited as there are some cultural issues we have the opportunity to address. And we will find time to address the continuing need to be stewards.

They teach me as I teach them by Sherry Thacker

Jesus said, "as you are going, make disciples" whether that is in Zimbabwe, Mozambique or Kenya. God has opened the door for us to make and equip disciples, it is an amazing experience. I pray that as I teach it is God's voice they hear and that it is abundantly clear.

I love connecting with the women as we open up God's word and watch as Jesus encounters women. We look back into the Old Testament and unfold the laws and customs, weaving them into the current story. We are then able to share what impact this story has on their lives as women today. Asking them to share how this effects them in their culture broadens the scope of learning. *They teach me as I teach them.* Their gentle honesty as they share is humbling and the depth of their questions astounding.

I am moved by these women. What an honor to love and teach them. I hear the sound of freedom! I see a faith that heals! I feel their courage to trust! A beautiful sight!



Sherry teaching under a tree



Kenya



Bruce teaching a session on stewardship



Bruce and Sherry in front of a Maasai home



Sherry given traditional clothes

Trip to Mozambique by Alone Gudyanga

When Bruce first came to Chiredzi, Zimbabwe in 2021, he was requested to move around all the Lowveld Churches of Christ teaching on stewardship. We thought of extending the lesson to Mozambique and the idea was widely accepted by the Mozambican leadership. That dream was finally realized in 2025.

On 4th of April, Simon, Bruce, Sherry and I left Chiredzi in the early hours of the morning to go to Mozambique for a much-anticipated leadership conference. Delegates to the conference were Church leaders, Preachers and their wives. Ten churches of Christ in the Manica and Gaza province of Mozambique were represented at this conference.

For this trip, we passed through Gonarezhou game park and we were lucky to see an elephant, impalas and baboons along the way. That encounter with the animals was a nice experience of our two American visitors. After some red tape crossing the border from Zimbabwe to Mozambique, we were soon on our way.

The roads in Zimbabwe are bad, but in Mozambique, they are worse. They are unserviced sandy roads. We got stuck once and had to be pushed to proceed. We arrived at 6 pm to our conference destination and were welcomed by local preachers and elders.

After feeding and allocation of accommodation we went to the nearby school for a church service. The school is Solar powered and well-lit at night. We started by singing and dancing followed by introductions and finally preaching by one of the local pastors. Thereafter everyone went to their respective accommodation.

On the 5th of April all the morning was dedicated to Bruce to teach about stewardship. The teaching was lively with a lot of participation from members. Upon review after the lesson, delegates were able to restate the major subjects addressed which demonstrated understanding of the lesson taught. Giving in their Churches for Kingdom expansion and support of local preachers was one of the major discussions. Sherry also had a chance to give an uplifting testimony targeting women on how, as good steward of God, helped advance the Gospel. The way how Bruce and Sherry complement each other in their teaching is amazing.

The afternoon session saw the historic ordination of the three Mozambican preachers that were trained at Central Africa Christian College: Jemusse, James and Paulo. Minister Simon from Chiredzi preached the evening service. It's interesting to note that each speaker had two interpreters, that is, for an example from English to Shangani and Ndau. Thanks to Simon, the multilingual preacher, everyone was able to understand in their own language.

Sunday morning, we had wonderful singing and dancing. Mozambicans have wonderful voices. Shona, Ndau, Shangani and English songs were sung. I really enjoyed every part of the worship service. Elder Nyambi from Mavende was the presider for the day. It was a well-organized service. I presided over the communion and giving, then finally Bruce shared the last sermon.

After the Church service we had lunch and thereafter left for Chiredzi. It was a busy weekend for all of us. As a driver I had no chance to take a nap along the way. To keep me awake Bruce had a very good gospel music collection that he played until we reached Chiredzi.

The work of God in Mozambique is growing and the natives need a lot of support for the Lord's work to continue. The economy in Moza is going through difficult times but like the Macedonian Churches, during a severe ordeal of suffering, their abundant joy and their extreme poverty have overflowed in the wealth of their generosity. They are always hospitable to their visitors and they are working very hard to register their Churches in line with the government's requirements. More so each congregation is in the process of building a place of worship. Let's continue to pray and support the Lord's work in Mozambique.



Mozambique is a neighboring country to Zimbabwe



Bruce preaching in Mozambique with Simon interpreting in two other languages



Ordination of preachers. Interestingly, the wives were invited up and gave testimony that their husband was married to only one wife.



Prayer of dedication

Maranda Clinic— Waiting Mother's Village A Haven of Hope and Community by Prisca Chongoveza



Pregnant Mother's Village at
Maranda Clinic



Maranda Mission in the southern
lowveld of Zimbabwe

In the heart of our clinic lies a vibrant community known as the pregnant mother's waiting village, a place where expectant mothers come and stay in anticipation of their babies being born. This village has transformed into a sanctuary of hope, comfort and shared experiences, fostering a sense of belonging among women who are navigating the journey of motherhood.

A WELCOMING ENVIRONMENT

The village features beautifully constructed traditional round houses, each equipped with comfortable beds, sheets, and curtains creating a warm and inviting atmosphere. Also, the village has a dining hall, complete with a cooking area where mothers can prepare meals together, exchanging stories and laughter, forming bonds that will last long after they leave the village and strengthens their connections. One mother, Sikholiwe Guvi, shared her delight "When I arrived, I felt like I was stepping into a home rather than a clinic. The beds are very comfortable and I liked the showers and flush toilets that are inside. It is indeed a home away from home"

A SPIRITUAL NOURISHMENT

A unique aspect of the Pregnant Waiting Mother's Village is the morning devotions led by Pastor Rinopisa and Bible studies that I lead as the women's spiritual care coordinator at the clinic. Every morning, mothers gather to reflect, pray, and share their thoughts. Progress Musi who is expecting her first child said, "These sessions provide us with strength and hope. It is a time to connect with God and with each other. Also, Bible studies provide us with practical wisdom and valuable insights on parenting skills." My compassionate approach as the coordinator has created a safe space for mothers to explore their spiritual journeys and emphasize the importance of faith during this transformative time, helping women find peace and comfort in their circumstances.



Prisca making up one of
the beds at the waiting
mother's village

One of the most impactful aspects of my work is grief counseling sessions which has provided invaluable support. Days after completing my online training provided by the mission, I came across a case of a 17-year-old mother who had tragically lost her first child at the clinic, and I was able to provide crucial counseling and support during this devastating time. Although it was a painful experience, I was able to provide vital support to a grieving mother who had lost her baby.

At Maranda clinic, every story matters, every laugh is celebrated and every tear is acknowledged. As mothers eagerly await the arrival of their little ones, they carry with them the strength of our community, a reminder that they are never alone on their journey into motherhood.

All thanks to Almighty God for His blessings and love. And thank you Auntie Donna and friends for your continued love support!

As We Go Missions

REVIVAL AT MLELEZI By preacher Baston Govo



Donna Stroop with the team from Highline Christian Church

Mlelezi and Rushumbe churches were planted in the early 1960's by American Missionaries. It's my pleasure that these two churches are still existing and our Almighty God is doing wonders in the churches and the community. The Burris family worked with the churches on Maranda tribal land 1969-1976. Our sister, Donna Burris Stroop, revisited our two churches in 2022. She had heard that there were churches still meeting in this remote location where she remembered visiting with her parents as a child. She was so impressed that the churches were still faithful after more than forty years since any outside visitors had been to that area. In fact, for many years the church continued meeting under a tree with just a handful of faithful women.

After sister Donna's visit and the interest that she encouraged among her friends, in a short period of time we experienced a great revival in our churches. The level of growth and expansion of God's work has never been witnessed before. Through the aid of our overseas partners from Highline Christian Church, our community has been filled with great joy and it encourages them to serve and worship God. The church now has a great impact in this community and this has led to huge growth in our Churches. Several projects have been started and these have proved to be the best tools for evangelism in our community. Some of the projects include:

1. MLELEZI CHURCH BUILDING

Our friends from Highline Christian Church assisted us to begin construction of a five hundred capacity main church building. Our community expresses their heartfelt gratitude for this big project. The building was completed in less than three months, after which we witnessed the conversion of many members of the local community to the faith.

(A) CHILDREN'S MINISTRY

This ministry is growing rapidly with many young people coming to the church after the completion of the church building. I am happy to inform you that I now have two volunteers to assist with this department, These members have devoted themselves every Sunday to serve and teach children.

(B) DISCIPLESHIP

After having noticed the influx of many new converts to the faith, we have decided to establish discipleship classes for all new members to mentor and disciple them to become mature firmly grounded believers. Among the new believers are six men who we are already training with the long term desire and vision that they become leaders of the church.

(C) BAPTISMS

From the past baptism was not done regularly due to the shortage of water and baptistry pool. But our new church building has all the facilities for baptism. Recently I baptized nine new converts in our church building. And another eleven converts from Rushumbe church are to be baptized soon. Since the day I started working with the Churches here, we have baptized a total of sixty eight people.

2. BOREHOLE PROJECT

In the past years the community was fetching water from the dam. There was no access to clean safe water. The community is now filled with great Joy as our friends from united states drilled a borehole and installed a solar pump at the church site. Now the church, the school and the community have an access of Clean water and the problem of water shortages was solved completely. This borehole water also reminds a lot of people from this community that there is a living water, the water of life which is Jesus Christ Himself.

We are filled with great Joy at the revival that has been brought to this community. The community expresses their gratitude for what they have received and continue to enjoy as a blessing from God through supporting partners in the US. We also want to thank our sister Donna Burris Stroop, daughter to Dan and Esther Burris; who has been immensely supporting us to ignite and keep this revival going on. Her efforts in introducing her friends from Highline Christian Church to partner with us are greatly appreciated.



The newly completed 500 seat capacity church building at Mlelezi in the shape of a cross

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We invite you to join us with your prayers and support. You may give by sending a check to the above address or go online to www.aswegomissions.org and click donate for several electronic options. Thank you!