

MY 3RD TRIP TO NAMIBIA



MAY 2010

INTRODUCTION

Over 20 years ago, two men who made a deep mark on my life, Stephen Bradley and Dudley Foord sent me to Namibia to conduct Bible Schools for our Churches in Namibia under Peter Kalungula. They were wonderful times and now here I am, back in Ondangwa after such a long time, it's a great joy and privilege.

As always I read before I come on these visits, especially books on missions.

1. FAITH UNDER FIRE:

This is a book written by Peter Hammond on the work in the Sudan. He says:

"one of the great tragedies in Africa is the Sudan. The largest country in Africa, Sudan was engaged in the longest war in African history. Since independence in 1956 more than half the land once under cultivation has reverted to scrub and there are now 5 million peasants ... into refugee camps. Millions have been slaughtered in the Islamic Jihad or have succumbed to starvation and disease. BUT ...despite the relentless persecution, the Churches in southern Sudan are experiencing phenomenal growth. Thirty years ago only 5% of Sudan claimed to be Christian; now 32% identify themselves as Christians. In the south 85% of the population attends Christian services..." The huge challenge he says "there are no training facilities for church leaders in the south, due to the unstable war situation. Most congregations are without trained pastors and are being led by evangelists who often struggle to read and write."

The challenge to bring teachers to Africa is overwhelming, the need is massive.

2. GLOBAL WARNING: This amazing book plays on the title "global warming" which everyone is talking about and rather focuses on global warning urging us to take the great commission seriously. Listen to this amazing quote from the book:

"the need of the day is for the Church to rediscover - not deny - the truth of eternal punishment. What zeal in evangelism would surely follow."

*"So today with the Church. The evangelization of the world is possible** in this generation. However in order to keep the goal within reach convictions have to be maintained. That God has provided only one way of salvation is the plain teaching of the Word of God. The real question is not - is this true? Rather the real question is whether or not we allow this powerful truth to take dominion of our heart, mind and imagination. Remember, someone's eternal destiny depends on our response."*

So now as the Bishop to Africa I head up to Namibia where I will be visiting all our Churches, leading a huge confirmation service on the Sunday and encouraging the men particularly.

BACKGROUND TO NAMIBIA

Patrick Johnstone in his book "Operation World" speaks on Namibia and says the following:

- i. **Namibia has the highest percentage of Christians for any country in Africa.** The early labours of German and Finnish Lutheran and then Anglican missionaries gave birth to large denominations. The influence of liberal and then black theology eroded that spiritual heritage, and true discipleship and holy living are now in short supply. During the strife preceding independence the Church became deeply divided between those who supported armed struggle and those who did not. Pray for a unity, based on Scripture and bathed in the Spirit, that will bring reconciliation and revival.
- ii. **The evangelical witness has been strengthened** in recent years through new missionary thrusts by the **NGK, AEF/AIM, YWAM**, Baptists and Pentecostals to areas and peoples only superficially touched by the gospel. Charismatic fellowships - both independent and within many denominations have brought new life and fervour.
- iii. **Leadership training.** The major seminary in the country has been much influenced by black and liberation theology to the spiritual impoverishment of students going into the ministry. The result accelerated nominalization of the churches, lowering of moral standards for leaders and followers, and reliance on occultism rather than the Lord. The two evangelical seminaries in Windhoek started by the NGK and AEF/AIM united in 1992 to form the Namibia Evangelical Theological Seminary. The Namibia School of Theology in Windhoek is run by the AoG.



- iv. **Christian radio programmes** on the national network have had a remarkable impact counteracting liberal theology, restoring evangelicalism to mainline churches, and opening up resistant peoples such as the Herero to biblical teaching. Most of the 60 hours of religious programming every week has been evangelical in content, but since 1991 this has been reduced with mainline churches taking control of content.
- v. **Pressing social issues** must be addressed by Christians; the government has not the resources for adequate answers to:
 - a. **Full rehabilitation of combatants** and returned exiles from the independence conflict. Widespread economic stagnation and unemployment hinder this. Deep emotional scars and sin need to be faced. The San provided the South African army with some of the best bush fighters in the war, but their lot since independence has been one of tragic neglect and marginalization.
 - b. **Ovamboland**, where nearly half the population lives. It is on the Angola border and was particularly affected by the war. There is virtually no paid employment in the area. Unrest continues. There was revival in the area a generation ago.
 - c. **African Independent Churches** are strong among the Herero, Basters, Damara and Nama, bringing compromise with the ancestor worship and witchcraft of their forebears and hostility to the gospel. Pray for the tactful ministry of the NGK, AIM and AEF missionaries and Namibian Christians by means of teaching, radio and help ministries which are bringing many leaders to a living faith in Christ.
 - d. **Young people** clamour for education, but the education system suffered damage and decline in war. Pray for the spreading work of SU in secondary schools and for an effective discipling and teaching ministry that will shape tomorrow's leaders.
 - e. **Missionaries in both older and newer missions** need sensitivity and understanding as they minister within the new context of independence.

I try to keep a diary on my travels so here goes and I hope you enjoy it.

MY DIARY

THURSDAY 20 MAY

I had to get up at 2:30 am to leave by 3:00am in order to drive down to Pinetown and fetch Chico who graciously agreed to take me to the new King Shaka airport from where I flew to Johannesburg at 6:00am. From there I flew on to Windhoek where I was able to get a taxi which took me to another airport, Eros from where I caught a 3rd flight on to Ondangwa, arriving at 4:30 pm - a really long trip right up to the northern boundaries of Namibia.

Denis Nandi who was with me all those years ago met me at the little airport. He is retired now and we had an amazing time catching up on all the church matters. Sadly some of the men have now passed on.

From Ondangwa we drove to ONGWEDIVA, a new town which has sprung up since I was last there. Here I will be staying with David and Alison Greef, missionaries sent out from C.M.S. in Australia who very kindly will put me up. They are the most amazing family.



Enjoyed supper and headed for bed and some sleep.

FRIDAY 21 MAY

Had a great sleep and woke up to enjoy my daily reading from McChayne in Numbers, Psalms, Isaiah and 2 Peter. As always I follow it up from Oswald Chambers who wrote

"Jesus taught that a disciple has to make his relationship to God the dominating concentration of his life, and to be carefully careless about everything else in comparison to thatJesus is saying that the great care of the life is to put the relationship to God first and everything else second."

Before breakfast read from Hammond on the Sudan who said this

"the lessons to us today are clear. It is essential that we give priority to literacy training, Bible teaching and leadership training. We need to build healthy self supporting, self governing and self propagating churches. We need to teach and practice decentralization and the priesthood of all believers."

Now on our way to visit some of our C.E.S.A. churches together with Denis Nandi, David Greef, Trish Hanekom and some of the leaders.

I. INDANGUEO (St. John's)

There was a church building in fairly good condition under the leadership of Pastor Albino. They average \pm 20 women, 12 men and Trish said a lot of children.

II. OHANGWENA (St. Paul's)

Again a building in good condition under Pastor Jeremias. Altogether there were about 20 adults and 20 children with the children singing two lovely songs for the Bishop.

III. OMUGWELUME (St. Luke's)

Here we found about 50 people waiting for us with VICTORIA heading up the work. The building is in a tragic condition, literally falling apart. After speaking to them and answering questions we went to a new site which they have bought and discussed the possibility of putting up a new structure at some stage.



It was humbling visiting these churches; they went out of their way to meet the Bishop and made you feel like a king when all I am trying to do is serve them. After six hours returned home to a lovely supper and then back to my little home. Finished reading 'FAITH UNDER FIRE' and again was so very challenged to the huge task facing us in Africa. Listen to Hammond

*"obstacles abound. Frustrations, disappointments and discouragements are occupational hazards and part of our job descriptions. Missionaries need endurance - a willingness and capacity to suffer hardships, discomfort, ** and more. Sacrificial service is more eloquent than many sermons."*

SATURDAY 22 MAY

Woke up early to do my Bible readings in Numbers, Psalms, Isaiah and started 1 John, Oswald Chambers had this to say this morning:

"He allows things for His own purpose. The things we are going through are either making us sweeter, better, nobler men and women, or ... they are making us more captious and fault finding, more insistent upon our own way. The things that happen either make us friends, or they make us saints, it depends entirely upon the relationship we are in to God."

Before breakfast started a new book "2000 YEARS OF CHRIST'S POWER".

This is part 3 of a series on Church History and deals with the Renaissance and the Reformation.

I had a laugh when I read of **Martin Luther!**



"Luther is of medium size, his body thin, and so worn out by burdens of responsibility and study, that you can almost count all his bones."

After breakfast went to visit our Church in a very remote area called ONAMAMBILI. The building was in fact the old pump house now converted into a church and is in fair shape, but really out in the rural areas. Along the route in our 4x4 we went and found a lady from the Church who had 2 massive pumpkins for us.

From there on to the main Church, CHRIST CHURCH, ONDANGWA which was built by the late Bishop Peter Kalangula. We spent 4 hours with the leaders and spoke from Acts 2 which they found helpful. Got the names and addresses of the leaders so will send them a newsletter on a regular basis.

On our way home had an excellent meeting with the Bishop of Namibia, BISHOP NATHANAEL NAKWATUMBA. It was conducted in a very friendly manner and I hope will create good relationships with the C.P.S.A.

After supper read from my book and listen again to Martin Luther, one of the most well known of his sayings:

"unless I am convinced by the testimony of the Scriptures, or by clear reason, I am bound by the Scriptures I have quoted and my conscience is captive to the Word of God ..."

SUNDAY 23 MAY

Read from Numbers, Psalms, Isaiah and 1 John to such great effect, how the Word continues to nourish and bless our souls. Oswald Chambers then said

"Jesus sums up commonsense carefulness in a disciple as infidelity. He always presents the point until we learn to make Him our first consideration. Whenever we put other things first, there is confusion. No great word of Jesus to His disciples is abandon."

Today all our Churches in Namibia are coming together in Ondangwa for a confirmation service and to see the Bishop So here goes!!! While on our way we picked up 16 people which we crammed into our 4x4. In order to get to some of them we literally drove through fields of mielies ... it was great fun and headed for Ondangwa. The Church was absolutely packed, ±300 people with 100 coming to be confirmed. The service seemed to go well and they went home so happy. It overwhelmed me to see how happy these people were to see the bishop ... they feel looked after again.

From there we were invited to Peter Kalangula's home where his daughter gave us the most amazing lunch. She is a lovely woman and loved seeing us all at the family home.

Returned home 9 hours later by so very fulfilled to be in Africa preaching the precious Word of God. Had a great shower and read from my book till I could stay awake no longer.

MONDAY 24 MAY

Up early to do my Bible readings and Oswald Chambers then Denis Nandi picked me up in ONGWEDUVA and so kindly took me to the airport at ONDANGWA from where I will catch a flight to Windhoek.

I had such a laugh ... the pilot had to go and fetch a tractor, hitch up the plane, go and re-fuel then bring the plane back again so that we could then take off. **This surely would only happen in Africa!**



In Windhoek I was met by Rev. Willem Den Hartog from N.E.T.S. who kindly took me to the seminary. I spent 2 hours with him and the principal Rev. Josh Hooker in what was a fantastic time, linking up for the future! Their facilities are amazing BUT sadly they have only 27 students in residence, but a huge number in distance learning.

Took a taxi to the airport and flew to Johannesburg, then on to Durban from where I drove up to Pietermaritzburg arriving 15 hours later.

CT STUDD

“some wish to live within the sound of church or chapel bell, I’d rather run a rescue shop within a metre of hell.”

Now.....SOME PERSONAL REFLECTIONS



To return to these people after 20 years was an amazing experience, one I will not forget quickly but here are some thoughts to share with you.

1) BISHOP TO AFRICA:

This has been an enormous blessing to me. My trips this year into Zambia and the Democratic Republic of Congo were life changing experiences. Now to re-visit Namibia after 20 years was an incredible joy and privilege. God has given me a great love for the people of Africa and I would love to spend my remaining years serving this continent. I made amazing contacts for the future which is so exciting.

Patrick Johnstone - "we are living in the time of the largest gathering of people into the Kingdom of God that the world has ever seen ... there has been a multiplication of Protestant missionary sending and support agencies over the past 2 centuries; this has become a world wide phenomenon of great significance."

2) CHURCHES IN NAMIBIA

Since the death of Bishop Kalangula our Churches up here have felt abandoned and forsaken, so for me to come as the bishop was massive. The congregations of ± 300 with 100 confirmations was an indication of the feeling of the people, they now are very encouraged. I promised to visit them once every 6 months. But sadly the ministers are now all very old and there is a desperate need for new men to come in. Another huge bonus was my meeting with the Anglican Bishop of Namibia, Bishop Nathanael Nakatumba. We spoke for about $1 \frac{1}{2}$ hours and I hope a new friendship will arise between our Churches which will further the Kingdom in the days ahead. BUT $\frac{1}{2}$ the population of Namibia lives in Ovamboland so we are in a STRATEGIC position.

3) TRAINING AND KMBC

This is without a doubt the number one issue. In November and together with David Greef I would love to run a "Pastor's Conference" and spend time training a new group of preachers as well as encouraging our older men. Because my meeting with Bishop Nakatumba went so well, David Greef has suggested we invite the Anglican Church to join us as well. In addition most of our people have

not high academic standards which means K.M.B.C. again can play such a critical role in training leaders for the future. K.M.B.C. with its emphases can play a very important part in training Pastors for Africa; I am more persuaded of that than ever before. Together at this conference, we also need to spend time with all our leaders and address the structures, because at the moment it is in chaos. Denis Nandi needs successors to take up the reigns for a new era.

4) RESOURCES

Again one is so stirred to see how meager the resources are which our ministers work with. Our little fund "Books for Africa" can play such a wonderful role in supplying evangelical commentaries for our men. They desperately need resources. I hope to send all our men a newsletter once a month which may help a little as well.

5) NAMIBIA EVANGELICAL THEOLOGICAL SEMINARY (N.E.T.S.)

I spent 2 hours with the principal JOSH HOOKER and the dean of distance learning WILLEN DEN HAROG. It was a brilliant time of building relationships which will aid the work greatly in the future. They were very keen to work with me in organizing the pastor's conference in Ondangwa in November where I will invite the Anglican Church to join us. These are exciting times. Also we discussed K.M.B.C. and the small part it can play in preparing students for N.E.T.S. No one addresses the poor, the financially disadvantaged, so many only focus on the academic and financial qualifications ... I long for K.M.B.C. to plug that gap and continue to send trained pastors into Africa, trained with the Word of God.

So I return from another trip into Africa so very blessed, fulfilled and praying that the Lord may open many doors for ministry in the future. I want to serve Africa and train pastors for this great continent which I have grown to love. Let Andrew Murray close for us:

"it is one thing for a minister to be an advocate and supporter of missions: it is another and very different thing for him to understand that missions are the chief end of the church, and therefore the chief end for which his congregation exists. It is only when this truth masters him in its spiritual power that he will be able to give the subject of missions its true place within his ministry."

NEMU YAMBEKE