

RENEWAL MINISTRIES REPORT ON MOZAMBIQUE 2015

This trip had been coordinated by Fanwell Chilondela of the Kekako Community in Zambia. Fanwell, who is a real go-getter, made the initial contact and got a letter of invitation for us from the bishop in Mozambique. We were flying for the first time from London to Blantyre, Malawi, with the final driving destination a parish in Mozambique. The city in Mozambique is only one-and-a-half hours from Blantyre. When the aircraft landed, we got up with most everyone else, thinking we were at Blantyre. A few people remained, which gave us pause, and so we asked, “Is this Blantyre?” The locals laughed at us, “No this is Lilongwe.” Good thing we asked.

After another hour flying and another stop, people were kind and they volunteered, “This is your stop!” We saw nothing but fields on most sides of a very small airport. After clearing immigration, we walked outside with our luggage into the bright afternoon sun and did not see our contact, Fanwell. We were beginning to doubt that we were in the right place and started to get a little nervous, but suddenly our prayers were answered, and he drove up and introduced us to one of the leaders of the Charismatic Renewal of Malawi named Peter Mlauzi. Peter was so happy to meet us, and he drove us to the lodge of another member of the Renewal named Alice. Alice owns a very nice lodge called Kurumba Lodge, high on a breezy hillside where many Europeans stay.

That evening, we had a meeting with all the leaders of the Charismatic Renewal in Malawi along with their chaplain, Fr. Enock Kanjira. Fr. Enock is also the rector of the minor seminary and an intense young priest who wants more for the people of Blantyre. They called this special meeting to ask us to come to Malawi next year for evangelization training. We also found out that some of our old friends are there from Uganda. Fr. Emmanuel Tusiime and Betty from the Yesu Ahuriire Community were in Blantyre giving a LIS priest retreat. Fr. Enock had invited the Uganda team to give this LIS seminar for the priests. They had spoken very highly of the work of Renewal Ministries in Uganda and the Malawi team really wanted us to come help them. They shared that many university youth were being pulled out of the Church by the Pentecostals and that they were undergoing turmoil in the area of healing and deliverance. They said catechesis is very poor, and they want to have their leaders go through training on our Catholic faith. We were impressed with this group and feel our stopping in Blantyre was a true “God Event.”

We left for Mozambique the next day. At the border, we had no problem leaving Malawi, but we were stopped in our tracks trying to get into Mozambique. We had been told that getting a visa at the border would be no problem, but that obviously wasn’t right. After thirty minutes or so, we were told they couldn’t issue a visa there and we couldn’t get into their country that day. They said we would have to drive the hour-and-a-half back to Blantyre to get our visa at the Mozambique Embassy and come back tomorrow. We only had a few short days at Immaculate Conception Parish in Milange, and the people were waiting for us, so we began to pray.

Antonio Eduardo Manuel from the Diocese of Quelinane, who was our contact for Milange, Mozambique, told us to pray and wait while he made phone calls. After about two hours and a call from their superiors, they “decided that they could in fact give us a visa.”

Despite the bureaucracy we encountered, the people of Milange were beautiful. The charismatic group and the other conference participants greeted us outside the compound under the trees at the slightly run-down parish of the Immaculate Conception. They met us with loud, joyful, and enthusiastic singing and escorted us to the chapel, where Fr. Hugo Clemente Divinhar formally greeted us and showed us the modest chapel. After lunch and a short rest, we started the program around 4 p.m. Father wanted Lloyd to talk on apologetics, because the Pentecostals are attacking the people's lack of knowledge with all the usual lies and half-truths. It is small wonder that the catechesis is poor, as the main church has 700 Catholics and Father has 300 outstations!

Around 6 p.m., we celebrated a beautiful short Mass. Fr. Hugo asked me to help him distribute Communion. We were very close to a main thoroughfare, with lots of street noise and street people. Because the conference was open to people from all the surrounding areas, some of the people who presented themselves for Communion were not Catholic. Father held up Jesus and said in their language, "The Body of Christ." If they didn't answer, or if they said something other than "Amen," he repeated himself. If a satisfactory answer didn't escape their lips, he lovingly but forcefully turned them away.

At the Mass, we noticed at least three young people who were mentally disturbed or had emotional problems. One was a young man who looked like he was in his twenties. He was always laughing and smiling broadly, insisting on being up front with us and Fanwell. He loved being with Fanwell and stuck to him like glue in the front pew. We don't think he is treated so lovingly most of the time. He was intelligent, but he was only about the size and understanding of a six-year-old, shoeless, dirty, and always asking for food. Jesus always draws these beautifully blessed youth to Himself. We called the young man Buddy.

After Mass we ate, unpacked, took a cold bucket bath in the shower stall, and retired. Lloyd and I wake very early, as usual, and somewhere around 7 a.m. a bucket of hot water mysteriously arrived in the bathroom outside our door.

We started teaching after a few songs around 9 a.m., but at 10 a.m. we break, because we are told the participants have not eaten breakfast yet! When they returned, Lloyd continued with a very good teaching on the Sacraments—what they truly accomplish and what they signify. After lunch, I started on the Five Keys. Mass was at 6 p.m., and by 6:30 p.m. it was dark and the electricity failed. They then brought out the candles. There is something really beautiful about receiving Jesus in the ambiance of candlelight. It was another beautiful Mass. After Mass, the participant's meal was cooked by fire in huge pots which was usual; however, without lights it was a challenge. In the middle of our "candlelight dinner" with Father and his two well-mannered, ever-present cats on the floor next to the table, the lights came on and we finished and retired.

In our second-story room, we could hear the sounds of the cars, huge trucks, and motorcycles on the street below. We also heard loud music from a bar or disco hall or rave joint. Whatever it was, it was loud. We read and then tried to sleep. It got louder and more abrasive. Sleep was elusive. I thought, well, maybe at midnight it will stop, this is Africa and not a big-city bar. Nope, it didn't stop. OK, I thought, maybe at 2 a.m. they will close down like the bars in San

Antonio. Not. It continued along with a siren in between songs! I then thought that maybe at 4 a.m. they would have danced and drank enough. Nada! It continued until well after 8 a.m. Who could be the last person dancing? Harassment served up by the defeated one!

At 7:15 a.m., we arrived at the table bleary-eyed for breakfast, but it was a bare table top instead of the fully set table as usual. Everyone was running late. Why? Because no one slept. We are told this happens every Friday and Saturday. We start late, but everyone was cheerful. Children were part of the backdrop of noise. The contrast was startling from the last Catholic Charismatic Renewal Conference that we were asked to speak at in Ohio just a day before we left for Africa to facilitate the Catholic Charismatic Conference in Mozambique. In America, white hair and no children, teens, or young people. In Africa, black hair and mothers with babies' mouths attached to the breast and all ages of children running in and out. What Miley Cyrus hopes other people find shocking, these beautiful, humble precious mothers would not even look at twice.

I continue my teaching on the Five Keys. As usual, I give a few examples of freedom using the Five Keys from Rwanda, because the stories are dramatic. There are all ages of learners and some are young, so I ask, as usual, if they have heard of the Genocide of Rwanda. To our great amazement, no one in the crowd had ever heard of it. Good thing I asked. Not even the interpreter has heard of it. These wonderful citizens of Mozambique are still oppressed and the lack of education furthers the ignorance. They are isolated from the other African nations around them, because each country was colonized by people of different languages. Most neighboring countries speak English or French and also the local languages, but Mozambique speaks only Portuguese and their local languages.

Later, I asked where they profess their faith. Not one of them identified with the Profession of Faith in Mass. So we simplified the level of teaching and taught what we felt the Lord called us to. We were surprised that the conference was not spoken in Portuguese. Instead, the translator spoke Chichewa. Fanwell, who is from Zambia, speaks Bemba and a street language called Nyanja and we found out that the participants could understand his Nyanja and he their Chichewa. It really helped out when certain words were hard for the interpreter and Fanwell could jump in for clarification. He was a blessing!

That final evening, after supper, we held an empowerment and healing service. When we arrived, the church was packed and there were about fifty people laying or sitting on the floor in need of healing. As Lloyd began to explain the dynamics of healing and share stories of the Lord's healing touch, a number of manifestations began to occur. Many of the people were there for the first time and had not received our training on the Lordship of Jesus and the power of forgiveness.

Normally when we lead the people to accept Jesus, forgive, and renounce the evil one there are no manifestations. When Lloyd invited the Holy Spirit to come in power, things got real interesting, but the Lord brought order out of chaos! Many reported healing and others found peace. It was a real eye-opener for many and all were blessed. Later that night, no one was looking forward to another sleepless night. But to our surprise, the music was there but not as

loud, and was more Portuguese and local sounding, rather than demonic. Praise the Lord. We slept through it. Perhaps the demons from across the street were cast out!

Sunday Mass was at 6:30 am. Lloyd and I got there at 6:20 a.m., and the place was full, but we managed to find seats. People kept pouring in until every bench was full and overflowing. With every bench totally full, people preferred the cold cement floors to standing. Songs were sung by the whole choir and bodies beyond, all in total synchronization of body, mind, and spirit. The Gloria took at least ten to fifteen minutes alone. Everyone sang with great joy and full-throttle ahead. It was a beautiful, joyful Mass.

Before the final blessing, Fr. Hugo asks Lloyd, Fanwell, and I to come up in front of the altar. They wanted to honor and thank us for the conference. Buddy had been there at Mass, wandering the aisles, and coming to give Lloyd huge hugs. Of course, he walked onto the altar with us. What a happy soul. The choir started and two women began dancing with a plastic wicker basket of flower petals and rice. We were showered with them as the 700-person congregation sang and danced with great delight. Father took our hands and swayed with the music. Then we were given many gifts, most of which we sent home with Fanwell on the bus. After Mass, we ate lunch with Father and packed our bags. Antonio, our interpreter/driver, took us back to Malawi. We had no problem crossing the borders.

On our trip back, Antonio repeatedly asked us to come back next year. He works with Bishop Hilário da Cruz Massinga, OFM, the bishop of Quelimane, to oversee the Charismatic Renewal. Antonio was extremely impressed with this conference. I think this Renewal Ministries' team was the first outside group to ever come there. He is going to ask the bishop if next year's conference could be held at his lodge, which is near the parish church, because he has over one-hundred rooms for out-of-town participants, as well as a large conference room. He is a successful businessman who loves the Lord and uses his talents for the kingdom.

We returned to Blantyre, Malawi, that night and had dinner with all the Charismatic leaders as well as our Ugandan friends. It was interesting to find out that Fr. Emmanuel had been trying, as a representative of ICCRS, to get into Mozambique for a number of years, but was unsuccessful. Once again, Fanwell accomplished what others couldn't! It seems that most of the places we go in Africa—Uganda, Zimbabwe, Zambia, Malawi, and Mozambique—the leaders all know and respect Fanwell. It is a huge blessing for him to use his contacts to set things in motion.

We were excited about what the Lord did in Mozambique, but even more excited about the prospects in Malawi. It is a kind of two-for-one trip. One trip and airfare to serve two countries. The leaders in Malawi are all successful business people, solid, and in a strong relationship with the Church. They are movers and shakers! We really sense that the Lord is doing something special and has brought the right priest and leadership team together for a fresh outpouring of His Holy Spirit. Our arrival while the Uganda team was there was no accident. The Lord has a plan and we are truly blessed to be a part of it!