

Trekking Across
A Continent Of Contrast



**AFRICAN
WORKSHOP
ODYSSEY**



DICKSON

African Workshop Odyssey

– Trekking Across A Continent Of Contrast –

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AFRICAN WORKSHOP ODYSSEY

– Trekking Across A Continent Of Contrast –

Hang on, I want to take you on a trip throughout southern Africa. I want you to experience the culture of the land. And in experiencing the culture to enjoy with us the beauty of a continent that is not quite as “dark” as you might think. It is a continent of great receptivity. A continent that is open for the preaching of the gospel. On this trip I was quite surprised at the receptivity concerning what we had to offer as a Bible study curriculum. In fact, I was overwhelmed. Nothing is more powerful than an idea whose time is right (Victor Hugo). And the idea that we had to offer to religious leaders throughout the trip reminded us that we are moving into the right paradigm in reference to world evangelism.

PACKING OUT

“How long are you going to be gone, A MONTH!” were the words of Martha as I kept buying and packing this and that for what I thought would be about a two-week venture to introduce Short Term Bible Schools (STBS) to three countries to our north. Well . . . after over 6,200 miles later and 30 days on the road it seems now that Martha’s statement was somewhat prophetic.

PACKING CONTRABAND

Before I left I quietly scurried myself out into the night the evening before departure. I made my way down to the local store that Martha and I frequent in order to top up on some “American Survival Juice.” (Ok, Ok, it was Dr. Pepper.) I was tempted to wrap the four purchased cans in a brown paper bag. I



And so I lived out of the back of our Ford Ranger, sleeping comfortably in the back with cooker, cans and cups. Better than a tent when it is raining lions and hyenas. And besides, it allows me the opportunity to be driving down the road, and then putting it in 4X4 and going off into the bush.



So what does it take to do a complex trip of meetings throughout four countries? THREE CELL-PHONES AND A PORTABLE CHARGER. One cellphone is dedicated to the South African network, another to the country in which I am traveling, and the other (a Blackberry) for international communications. Did Paul have all this?

scuttled home and secretly buried the coveted drink among my vital necessities for the trip, right close to the survival kit. This was without Martha's knowledge for I knew that if she knew I would be chided for my intoxicating craving for some sips of this stuff in the heat of middle Africa. I felt like a drug addict. The four cans lasted me about three weeks. Each savoring swallow was a celebration over some great event of the trip. Folks in Africa will never understand this. The next best thing would have been four cans of root beer. (And for African brethren reading this, "beer" here is not alcoholic beer.) Nevertheless, I thoroughly enjoyed my moments of ecstasy when downing the Dr. Pepper.

THE TRASH-CAN TEA CUP

There were a gazillion things to remember to take on an extended African odyssey of this nature. On the first morning after camping the first night I remembered that the most essential article of our English heritage straight from the Motherland, Britain, was left back home in the cupboard. I had a moment of despair over the fact that I had forgotten my tea cup. This called for real African bush ingenuity. The night before I had prepared some cuisine of tomato soup straight from a can (tin). I remembered that I had discarded the can in the communal campsite trash with an assortment of other articles that were left by wandering campers. So, I hesitantly wandered over to the trash, lifted the lid, and viewed . . . you know what is in a rubbish bin. So tightly holding my nose, I scrounged around until I laid hands on my "trash-can tea cup." After flicking off a few ants and other creatures, and washing it thoroughly, tea will never taste the same again. That trash-can tea cup stayed with me for another three weeks.

KEETMANSHOOP, NAMIBIA

Joe Lewis? No, not the boxer but my contact in



Remember? Probably most of the young people today in America have no idea what this picture is all about. But let me say this, a Coke does not taste better than out of a bottle. In Africa, this is the least expensive way to sell Coke, which is all over the continent. Africans do not throw away the bottle. It is real money. So all bottles are returned for refilling. The only thing you will find on an African trail is a Coke bottle cap. You will find them on jungle trails.



Don't laugh. It served me well for three weeks. I finally remembered to buy a mug in a store. But I can't remember if tea was better out of the Trash Can Cup or the store-bought mug. I cannot explain now why I have an aversion to tin cans.

the city of Keetmanshop, Namibia who arranged a meeting with area leaders. I had heard through the African vine that there were church leaders in Keetmanshop who were interested in starting their own Bible school.

One knows where God is working when He brings people together for those unique encounters that will accomplish the preaching of the gospel. When right ideas meet desire, great things happen. So a wandering evangelist who had the vision of establishing STBS (Short Term Bible School) is brought into contact with Zezito Epifanio who had already had his own dream for starting his own Bible school. One of his best friends, Joe Lewis (not the boxer) is an evangelist who travels to towns throughout the sparsely populated territory of southern Namibia. Now think about the discussions we had about making Keetmanshop the center of Bible education where Zezito wanted to start a Bible school, and then, connecting Joe's ministry of establishing cluster study groups throughout southern Namibia. Martha and I would supply the Bible curriculum for the entire network of study groups. Just imagine the opportunity? We will see how far God opens this door. I know that when Zezito announced the STBS the first Sunday after I left he had over 20 people who wanted to enroll. He said he could take only ten. The next week they started on the ten course curriculum. I am still in the surreal realm, and thus, wondering what is going to happen with this open door.

My mission for the trip was to visit with church leaders of all religious groups before we made the official launch of the STBS curriculum the middle of the year. I wanted to see where they were and how church leaders felt about training people in the Bible with courses that we would offer. We were simply offering a curriculum of ten courses. (Later, the leaders said they wanted more courses.) The Bible school would be theirs. We were not bringing a Bible school,



When you travel Africa you must expect anything to cross the road. Sometimes, you have no idea what it is, since there is such a diversity of wildlife. I believe this is an Oryx.



Everyone who has lived in Africa for any length of time can identify with this scene. There are always cows, or goats, or sheep, or donkeys on the road. They are just everywhere, and for this reason you cannot speed or drive at night.



Just off the road, but close enough to alert you to be more cautious. Giraffe's are easy to spot, for their heads are usually above the trees. I have never seen Giraffes by themselves. They are a communal species of animals, just as Christians should be.

only a curriculum of courses they could freely use. What greater way to evangelize the world and teach the Bible than to get churches of all religious groups teaching our material. What I discovered on the February/March trip was that they were tired of sending their best off to a “theological school,” and then never returning to help. So God was preparing the soil before I arrived. Every church leader with whom I met was ready for the idea. I met with more than 170 church leaders, and the reception of the idea was fantastic. After my personal encounter with these leaders, Martha and I then prepared to make the official launch of the concept worldwide when I returned from the trip. We knew that we were going to overwhelm ourselves, but you cannot turn away from open doors as this. You simply cannot say no. One must always remember what Margaret Thatcher said, “If not us, then who? And if not now, then when?”

NEXT AMERICAN PRESIDENT

I was staying with a house fellowship group in Luderitz, Namibia. The eleven-year-old daughter of the group leader, Mildred, was as sharp as she could be. She took her schooling seriously, especially her English classes. I believe she had a determined goal in life.

I carried on in my conversation with her in fluent English. I commended her for her studies and encouraged her to continue, for one day, I said, “You will be a great person.” I remarked, “You may one day be the president of Namibia.” “No, No,” she quickly replied. “I’m going to be the president of America.”

Africa has a great future because there are some up coming great leaders.

ON TO KHORIXAS

Imagine yourself just this side of nowhere. Then add to this the anxiety that comes over you when you



One of the most beautiful experiences of driving Africa are the mornings. A chorus of birds will awaken you every morning. There are thousands of species of birds throughout the continent. It is a birders paradise. Bring binoculars and a telephoto lens.



Desert plants know how not to be eaten.



The house of Mildred, the coming president of the United States. This is the house of Natangwe and Corbon Tomas who arranged the meeting of church leaders in Luderitz, Namibia. Natangwe will start a STBS out of his house, where a church also meets. Small beginnings have big results.

are lost. Now you have experienced driving into the small outpost city of Khorixas, Namibia. No one goes there intentionally. When I was there, I asked a young man of about eighteen if he had been anywhere else. “No,” was his answer. And then I thought of myself growing up on a farm in Kansas with the closest “village” being Stafford with the grand total population back then of 2,700 people, counting some dogs and cats. (It is about 1,700 today. Advancing to the rear.)

Gerhardt Kariseb had texted me several times to get me to Khorixas. He was anxious to learn about the concept of Short Term Bible Schools, since he was a school teacher and principal. So I ransomed myself and made my way there, trusting that my map was not leading me to some wilderness of no return.

When we finally sat down in the city building to talk, I asked Gerhardt, “Where did you live before you came to Khorixas?”

“In the capital, Windhoek,” he replied. (Windhoek is a very beautiful city. One of the best that Africa has to offer.)

“And how long have you been living in Khorixas as a school teacher, and now a principal?”

“Twenty-five years.”

“Well, why did you ever move from the beautiful city of Windhoek to this forsaken town on the edge of the desert?” was my next question.

“I married a girl from Khorixas.”

I moved on in the conversation.

OVAMBOLAND

What an awesome experience I had in Ondangwa. I was seated among several regional leaders of many different religious groups. The administration of the newly formed STBS was there, plus, the students of the first course. I was there to officially inaugurate the establishment of their school for the northern most region of Namibia, which region of people stretched into southern Angola and northern Namibia.



The descendants of horses left by the Germans in Namibia after they lost World War I. The horses adapted to the desert and thrived.



The desert is really a lonely place to be when there is no one else around.



If you want to buy property, where to buy depends on location, location, location. If you build a house in the desert, I don't think the resale value will be very good. So you might just have to vacate your house and leave it to the elements of the desert, as this one hundred year old house in the desert.

(It was the Portuguese and Germans who drew a border straight through the Ovambo people over a century ago.)

What was interesting about the students of this meeting was that one was from Angola and was anxious to start a STBS in Angola. (I am looking for Portuguese translators.)

You would have just had to been there to experience the surreal environment of the historical moment. The people yearned for the teaching of the word of God. It reminded me of the days back in the early 70s when I first went to Grenada in the West Indies. People were captivated by the teaching of the Bible. We do not experience that in the urban cities of Africa. People are too caught up in the struggle to survive and advance in the city. But in rural settings of Africa, people still hunger and thirst after the word of God.

As the Ovambo people dig themselves out of centuries of religious confusion, you should have been there to inhale the greatness of their desire to know the truth of God's word. I am sure that restoration leaders experienced the same at the early beginnings of any restoration movement. I only sat in awe as those with whom I had been associated in Ovamboland for the past two years expressed their joy over completing Course 101, *Adventures in First Principles*. They had just experienced an adventure in studying God's plan for the redemption of man, and now, they were zealous to venture into more learning of the word of God in the remaining nine courses of the STBS curriculum. This was a restoration movement in the making.

I realized in Ovamboland that Martha and I were in the right paradigm. As other STBS are set up throughout the world, I told Martha on the phone, "God is doing something wonderful." The receptivity of the concept of local folks starting their own Bible school is quite overwhelming. I can only con-



The Ondangwa Bible School is organized with administrators (seated). Some of the 23 student body is standing with certificates for their completion of Course 101, *Adventures in First Principles*. The significance of this picture is that this event is in the early beginnings of a restoration movement and will extend into southern Angola. The administration is already in the process of translating the One World Book, *Finding the Priceless Pearl*.



What if you had the opportunity to buy a city block of buildings, one that will seat over 500 and others for trade schools and a Christian school, plus play ground equipment, kitchen for groups, ground for parking, etc.? What if you only had to pay US\$335,000 for the whole city block of facilities?

clude that this is a “God thing.” I will not misuse the word “miracle.” But I am sure there is another word in our English dictionary that is just short of the definition of the word “miracle” that would define a situation as this.

WATER OR FIRE

I was giving expository lessons for three days in Ondangwa, Namibia. One after another. On Sunday morning we arrived at the place of meeting at 9:00^{am}. I taught, the leaders exhorted, and I taught again. We sang, and the youth did their singing before the entire group. When it came to about 12:00, my mind was turning toward food, since the growning of my stomach seemed to echo in the tin building. But I did not know that the assembly would eventually carry on until 3:00 that afternoon. When I thought it was all over, one of the leaders stood up and said, “Brother Dickson, do you have more for us?”

Between where I was seated and where I stood, I pondered and then decided to preach on our unknown brother by the reference of, Mr. eunuch. So in Acts 8 I carried on for about forty-five minutes. But everyone became intensely fastened on the message and text when Philip and the eunuch came to a certain water. I said, “They both went down into the large body of water and Philip immersed the eunuch.”

I concluded and sat down. An old gentleman whom I had grown to respect greatly during my time there, stood to give a formal “thank you” for the lesson. He had been an Anglican priest for decades. And now at the age of 67 he said, “In the past days we have learned so, so much from brother Dickson. And now today I have learned that unless we are baptized by immersion we are in serious trouble.” He said pointedly to the assembly, “If you are not baptized you are going to hell.” Silence fell over the gathering.



People travel Africa in all sorts of vehicles. “Trucking Africa” is big business as groups are formed in Europe, America and other places of the world. They fly to Africa, and then travel as a group across the southern part of the continent.



It took an old Anglican priest to remind us that if one does not obey the gospel, he must look forward to that place of fire and brimstone about which few people speak today. It is for this reason that we published the One World Book, *Finding the Priceless Pearl*. It is a book about finding the gospel of Jesus’ death, burial and resurrection, and being obedient to this gospel message.

After the old Anglican finished, another church leader stood up to continue. He said something in the local language that I did not understand. But after what he said, immediately half the group popped up in unison as a cork pops out of water. It was not a lingering stand, but in a moment, in the twinkling of an eye.

Afterward I asked the leader what he had said to the audience that sparked such a response. He said, "I asked everyone who was there how many, and who, was sprinkled and it was called baptism, but later were immersed." I guess their response indicated that they did not want to go to the place about which the old Anglican priest spoke.

HEADED TO THE BORDER

Where I would stay every night on the road was a mystery that added intrigue to the journey. So I was up early in Rundu, Namibia and determined to bed down for the night in the east at a campsite before the Namibian/Botswana border. So I was on my way. As the distance in kilometers started counting down to only ten kilometers before the border, I knew that I had almost run out of options.

But alas, there was a sign, "Chobe Lodge Campsite." So I turned left into a small winding trail that would have challenged a snake. I bounced along for about half a mile and through numerous villages. I knew I was headed for the Zambezi River. And then I relinquished to some anxiety when I started crawling through mud holes that were mostly mud. I finally crossed a pond of water that reached almost to the depth of a tire. This all went well in the 4X4 until I maxed out the city tires on the Ford Ranger. I became stuck in mud so bad that it would make a Kansas farmer question my sanity for being out there in the middle of Africa with city tires.

So there I was alone and stuck, with no hope of freeing myself. When in such situations, what do you



How to savor a fine moment of victory in the Lord's work.



And why are their stones around the bottoms of all the telephone poles? Hint: Elephants. When there are no trees to push over, elephants have to push over something.



"Who dat?" Sometimes in driving Africa we are reminded that we are invading someone's privacy. There were others here long before we arrived, whose claim to the continent is more primitive than ours.

do? You pray and start walking for help. In Africa one need not walk far until he can find help. So to my rescue came six husky young African gentlemen in a nearby village who were more than willing to give a six-five-year old stranger help. They seemed to have done this before, since there were signs of other vehicles being stuck in the same place.

They all mustered to the back of the vehicle, secured a place of “pushing,” and then, with engine revved, we all gave a united effort to go forward. But the effort was futile. With all the human power combined with the house power, the Ranger would not budge. Not an inch forward. Now add to this the fact that we discovered that the back left tire was as flat as it could be, having been punctured by something in the mud. So what are you when you are stuck in some off road in the middle of Africa with a flat tire? Hopeless!

But Africans can be so helpful. They would never desert a poor soul in need. It is just not the African way. So off one scurried to find someone to aid in my dilemma. To his good fortune, or mine, he found someone with a 4X4 with a wench. To the rescue!

It was not an easy task to pull that Ranger out of knee deep mud with a flat tire. But African persistence prevailed. And to add to the hospitality of my new found friends, they changed the flat tire and sent me on my way rejoicing.

I made my way out of the mud quagmire and headed for the Botswana border. It was nearing late afternoon, so I made my way through the border as quick as one can possibly do so in Africa. (That’s not really “quick” according to Western definitions.) I then dodged elephant droppings through Chobe National Park for about fifty miles, and eventually arrived in the small town of Kasani. By this time both the Ranger and I had a mud color about us which gave me the inner urge to find water. I had sweated



Looking at a hapless man and in a hopeless situation.



A hopeless encounter with the clay mud of the Zambesi River.



Looking good again after three hours of labor and intense scrubbing. We are good to go.



After Africa has worked your case for a 14-hour day, this is the most welcoming sign you will ever see.

so much that I had salt lines on my shirt. All I could think about was the water of a shower under which I could linger for hours. And for the Ranger, I searched for someone to reveal again that it was truly “white” as described on the border entry form for the vehicle.

So I wandered aimlessly around Kasani, looking for a place to put my head down for the night after a very eventful day. The first signpost that said, “campsite,” was chosen as the night’s rest without any argument. It happened to be on the flooded banks of the Zambezi, which flooding waters had already overtaken some of the campsites. But flood waters high or low, I needed relief.

You know what was next. Nope, you are wrong. I had to find someone to wash my “while rhino” before I found showers for myself. The receptionist at the campsite remembered a young man at work who could do the job after hours. When the young man showed up, I asked, “How much?” He replied, “Fifty Pula” (about \$6.00). I said, “Forty.” He said, “OK.” About three hours later I felt bad about offering him less than what he originally asked. So I dug around in my pockets to find any change that eventually brought the amount up to forty-six pula. (It was not just mud on the vehicle, but clay mud that had dried hard. He truly labored to get it removed from the vehicle.)

AM I TOO OLD FOR THIS?

I am sitting here on the flooded banks of the Zambezi River. There is an electric fence along the river. The river has now risen under the fence and is reaching to my toes. I keep hearing something splashing around the flooded bushes. However, I feel a sense of security by the electric fence that is supposed to keep far away wandering hippos and crocs. (Then again, the sign on the fence says “electric,” but I am sure the “electric” has long passed away as things in Africa do.)

Nevertheless, I am two or three aching bones past



Campsite along the flooded Zambezi River.



I mean really flooded. This was on the news before I left Cape Town. They are saying that the Zambezi floods are growing year by year, to the point that the flood waters will change the course of the Zambezi River and Victoria Falls.



If you look close at the preceding picture you will see fencing along the flood Zambezi that is reaching into the campsite. It was an “electric” fence, though I am guessing that the “electric” no longer existed. Yes, I had the urge to touch it to see if it was truly electric. When I was a small boy they told me that you could smell electricity. So I put my nose close to an electric fence on the farm in Kansas to see if such were true. I found out that you could sure feel it if you could not smell it.

sixty-five and have put another 3,000 miles on these bones that have now wandered well over a quarter million miles over the pot holes of Africa. So I am wondering if I am getting too old for such wearisome wanderings from one pot hole to another and waiting endlessly at border posts listening for the music of the sound of a stamp pound down on my passport saying you are either free to go or free to enter. Have too many years passed to “up with put” (according to Churchill) those often frustrating things that make Africa such a wonderful environment to train the impatient, as yours truly is very much. Is there a time to relinquish to the proverbial “TIA” (a common statement made by frustrated Westerners in Africa, “This Is Africa.”)?

I am sitting here listening to the quiet giant Zambezi make its way around countless bends to the magnificent Victoria Falls where it dumps billions of gallons of water over a gapping crevasse in the earth. I hear the sounds of the cool African night, the crickets, the frogs, the assortment of sounds that only Africa can produce. I have enjoyed a day of African hospitality, a journey that has ended in the tranquility of this place. I unquestionably come to the conclusion that I will experience Africa another day. I am not that old yet. I said a frightening thing to a frustrated young man who was finding it difficult to find his destiny for Jesus. I suggested, “Would it not be great to die in the loving arms of an African brother or sister?” You have to love this place.

In the late 90s a good brother from Ghana wrote to me and said, “Brother Dickson, you are the Pen of Africa.” I have never forgotten that assigned destiny. That African brother will never know how much he spurred me on to what I have felt to be God’s gift, though I have often questioned my ability to write. I just do. And if I don’t write, I feel like I have buried something.

AN UNEXPECTED SURPRISE

Martha and I have been working with distance training since 1974 when we first went to Brazil. Through the International Bible Institute that was started in the West Indies in 1980 we have taken over



Even a carved wooden statue is a welcoming sight after a hard days drive.



So in Africa we do not have dogs in the backyard, we have warthogs. One time I came into the house of someone, sat down in the living room. I noticed that there was a “dog” sleeping on the couch. Nope, it was not a dog, but a warthog.



It would be good if the neighborhood dogs would simply be barking. But when elephants come through, the problems are somewhat compounded. The elephants did not like to be fenced in, so they broke down the fence of cement between these two houses. So much for feeling secure.

6,000 leaders through all our various levels of study of the curriculum that we developed over the years. But we, as well as others, seem to have missed one simple point that caught us off guard.

In former years we sought to consolidate the emphasis and interest of “school” around the identity of “our school.” So whether residential or distance, students were enrolled in our school. Either students or courses had to be sent to our school in order to be either tutored or graded. If anyone wanted to graduate from our curriculum, they had to enroll in our school.

The burden of the concept of “our school” became too limiting. God was growing the church worldwide far beyond the limits of theological schools that were owned by their creators. The traditional system of “school” was slow, expensive and overbearing on the administration and teachers. Add to this the fact that local churches were sending their best outside their region in order to go to school in some far away city. This was especially critical if the students left a rural setting and culture in order to go to the big city. After graduation, they never came back.

So my February/March trip was a paradigm shift for us. Instead of asking students to enroll in “our” school and belaboring them through distance training for seven years before graduation, we decided to give away the International Bible Institute curriculum to anyone who wanted to use it. We had produced a 50-course curriculum, but now it was time to give it away to anyone who wanted to start their own local Bible school as a local church.

From the curriculum we developed over the years, I selected ten key courses in which was embedded the essential teachings that would set one on the right course as a teacher of the Bible for the rest of his or her life. The *Master Textbook* of the ten courses could be used for research and teaching for years. Added to this was the *Study New Testament* that contained the *Encyclopedic Study Guide*. If students were tutored locally through these materials, we felt good about giving them a foundation to continue their teaching of the word of God.

So on my February/March odyssey to visit as many networks of churches as possible, I was overwhelmed with the desire of churches to do what we had been planning for the last six months. Everyone I met on my journey thoroughly rejoiced over the concept of giving the school to the churches instead of sending their students off to some far away school. The response was so overwhelming, that it caught me off guard. I knew where we needed to go with the concept of “school,” but I did not fully comprehend that so many others were also thinking in the same paradigm. In the days that I visited networks of churches, all the groups with which I met wanted to work together in order to start their own Bible school in their region. They saw the offer of our curriculum of ten courses an opportunity to keep their workers in their region and culture.

I believe God has opened to us a tremendous door of opportunity. Since we are working with religious groups of all persuasions, not everyone accepts our curriculum. Nevertheless, I told the leaders, “Do not accept everything written in the curriculum, for the curriculum was written by a man. If you agree with everything in the curriculum then you may become just another denomination.” They agreed, but said that they wanted to worked together regardless of the disagreements. Ours was the only curriculum being offered free, and thus they would use it.

(It is here that I want to say thanks for those contributors who are making it possible to print the curriculum. We have printed an initial 5,000 copies of the STBS curriculum to train that many leaders. We have distributed hundreds of thousands of copies of the same material throughout the years, both in printed form and electronic on the *Biblical Research Library* disk—of which over 600,000 copies have been distributed to date. We will see what God does with this.)

One can only give God credit for preparing the soil for this open door. Martha and I have for the last decade reminded ourselves that we are world evangelist. Our mission is to the religiously confused world, not the church. “Into all the world,” does not mean, “Into all the church of the world.” Too many missionaries get caught up in the affairs of local churches, and thus, their mission to the lost is detoured.

Now just think that there are hundreds of religious groups out there who are training their leaders using our curriculum. This is a God thing. What more can we want. We are teaching the world through leaders who have been trained with our curriculum. It can’t get much better than that. We must always remember what Paul did. He commended the people unto God and His word (Acts 20:32). We find people who love God, and then we commend them to His word. It is the word that produces the fruit, not the bearers of the word. We can take no credit for the fruit, for that is God’s business through His word.

VICTORIA FALLS

If I had been at Victoria Falls exactly two hundred years ago (1813), I could have said as Morgan Stanley, “Doctor Livingstone, I presume.” Stanley had searched throughout eastern Africa for the wandering explorer David Livingstone. All I had to do is pay my entrance fee to Victoria Falls to see his statue which stood upon the stone foundation that was made



I have been to Victoria Falls throughout the years in Africa at least five times. But this is the only time I witnessed it in full flood. Above is only one of the tributaries that dumps billions of gallons into a ravine. It is here that Cecil Rhodes build a train bridge across these falls so the passengers could feel the mist coming up from the ravine. The falls were named after Queen Victoria. In the evening on a full moon night there is a lunar rainbow.

by John Sheriff, one of the first missionaries of the church to make his way to these regions.

But I was there, not to view a flooded Zambezi River cascade 460 feet into a crevice in the earth, but to meet with preachers of all religious groups in the area. A good traveling salesman I met a year before in Otjiwarongo, Namibia had organized the meeting to discuss the distribution of the *Teacher's Bible* and the establishment of a STBS in the area. Ignatius Ncala had been trying to get me before the preachers of Vic Falls for over a year. And since I was in the area, that is, in the area of countries, I made the visit.

Ignatius had been in phone contact since I arrived in Namibia. The problem was that I could give him only a two day window as to when I would arrive. When I was nearing the end of my last phase of my trip in Namibia, I was able to be more specific. The day before I arrived he phoned all the preachers in the area. The next day about thirty preachers showed up for the introduction of the concept of the STBS. The response was as usual . . . overwhelming.

In each meeting I had on the trip I handed out the Information Pack which included the textbook material for the first course, *Finding the Priceless Pearl*. If they could make it through this material that was very specific on obedience to the gospel, then I knew there were those who were willing to learn and change.

While meeting with the Vic Falls preachers we tried to make a plan as to how we could get the *Teacher's Bible* to all the preachers in the area. This would be a difficult challenge since this is an inland country, and trucking of the *Teacher's Bibles* would be quite difficult. When I returned home, Ignatius phoned and said the preachers were willing to pay the US\$20.00 each to have the *Teacher's Bibles* sent to them by mail bag. We are also working on another plan to truck *Teacher's Bible* to someone in Harare,



David Livingstone is honored by all of Africa, for he made it his mission to preach Christianity and deliver Africa from the slave trade. My hand is on the base of the monument that was made by John Sheriff, the first missionary to the region in the early 1800s.



If you want to experience a year round rain, then stand in the continual mist that comes from the cascading water that splashes to the base of the Vic Falls crevice. It is truly refreshing on a 100 degree day.



Africa has taken pothole development to a whole new level.

the capital of Zimbabwe, and then sending out partial loads throughout the country. This is a plan in motion.

ON TO NAMWIANGA, ZAMBIA

Roy Merritt and his wife, Kathy, have been forever at the Namwianga Mission outside Kalomo, Zambia. While I was there he related a story concerning the early beginnings of the church in Bulawayo, Zimbabwe in the latter part of the 1800s. John Sheriff had come from New Zealand. He originally came to Johannesburg, South Africa looking for gold. But being “goldless,” he moved on to Bulawayo. He became a stone mason to support himself.

One night John saw a flicker of fire coming from the hut of one of his workers. He rushed to the hut with water only to find the worker stretch out on the floor reading from the flame of a home-made candle a small fragment of paper. John asked Peter, “What are you reading?” Peter replied, “I found this piece of paper blowing around in the streets of the city. I was reading what it says.”

John looked closely at the fragment and realized that it was a fragment from a page out of the Bible. Being a descendant of the restoration movement out of England that came to New Zealand, Sheriff was overcome by the moment. He considered the discovery of the fragment of Scripture to be a message from God that he needed to change the focus of his life. From that moment he resolved that he should be a teacher of the word of God in order to fulfill the great commission. So from that day his destiny changed. He started training young men whom he call “mustard seeds.” He sent these mustard seeds to countries as South Africa, Malawi, Zimbabwe and Zambia. And thus, the first spark of restoration began in these countries in the early 1800s. The beginning of the church in these regions was all the result



Africa has not done too well with large urban centers. Read carefully this sign that was posted outside a hotel that was frequented by foreign travelers.



Botswana is cattle country. Throughout Botswana and eastern Namibia there are cattle ranches everywhere. In fact, eastern Namibia is known as little Texas.



Most rural houses in Africa are still made as they were centuries ago. The thatched roof is still the best because of the heat. Heat will not penetrate the thatch. A good thatched roof will last for at least 30 years.

of a wind blown fragment of the Holy Writ on the streets of Bulawayo, Zimbabwe. Makes one think, doesn't it?

VISIT FROM THOMAS

It is always encouraging to return to places through which one passed years before. Such was my opportunity and experience in passing through the Namwianga Mission in Zambia. It had been over fifteen years since I had taught the preachers in the area of the Namwianga Mission outside Kalomo. Back in those days I was often on a trip up through Zimbabwe to Malawi, and thus, took the opportunity to teach preachers of the Kalomo region for one or two one-week sessions of study.

On this particular trip I could do no teaching since I would only stop by overnight to deliver sample copies of the *Teacher's Bible*, *Biblical Research Library* dvd, and the *Biblical Research Library* volume. I enjoyed the wonderful hospitality of the Merritts. When one of the teacher/evangelists, Thomas, heard that I was passing through, he rushed over to see me.

"It is so wonderful to shake your hand again brother Dickson. I will tell the others that I shook your hand again. They will be overjoyed." When we eventually said good-bye to one another, Thomas could not let go of my hand. I must confess that neither could I. It felt so good to see and experience Thomas again, a true evangelist who had not lost his zeal for the Lord.

Thomas had organized all the past seminars that I taught at Namwianga throughout the 90s. We had some great one-week seminars. Thomas wanted to reassure me that the materials that I had given them in those years were still being used throughout south-west Zambia. Whenever they started new churches, he said, the leaders were taught the same material that I taught back in the 90s. Such news was encouraging for a writer, for I hauled literature all over south-



Faded dreams. When the diamond industry was started in the Namib Desert in the 1800s, when the diamonds eventually ran out, so did the miners. Mansions of yesteryear still remind us of an industry that did not live up to the motto, "Diamonds are forever."



Dedicated people living alone as disciples on the Orange River. Boet is a farm manager for a large government farm and Miggie is a Bible teacher to local folks. Looking for a farm manager? Boet and Miggie Burger are ready to move.

ern Africa during those years. Since then, Martha and I have mail bagged out tons more. Though I do not have the time to do the week-long seminars, I have multiplied myself a thousands times over by just writing, printing and using the postman to keep me as the “pen of Africa.”

WISH I COULD STAY LONGER

A young university student named Paul, met me at a petrol station in order to show me where the saints were meeting for a particular one-night stopover I was making on my way to another destination. On the way to the location where we were going to meet, Paul said, “Brother Dickson, we were hoping that you could stay for a week.” I responded, “Unfortunately, Paul, I do not have that privilege any longer in my life.” Being a writer, school administrator, editor, printer, programmer, shipper, etc., etc., etc. leaves little time to linger long at any one place. What I have done in my life has been to put pen to paper and send the teaching throughout the world. I will thus leave the book and then move on to the next place. And such I did on the February/March odyssey when I distributed materials to about 500 hundred people throughout the four weeks of travel.

We can add to the distribution of the trip the *Biblical Research Library* dvd. While I was in Zambia and Botswana, Martha had a crew of volunteers in Cape Town making over 3,000 to be taken to Namibia by Denville Willie and Malvin Kivedo. We have now distributed about a half million of these throughout the world, with a goal of reaching a million. I found on this trip that the *BRL* dvd is being studied by thousands of people in places I never knew it could reach. How these little pieces of circular evangelistic plastic have been passed around would be a book of wonders. Two years ago we had stuffed twenty-five percent of the P.O. Boxes of all the post offices of Namibia. And now, these little “evangelists” are out there teaching and leading the people to and through the word of God.

TECHNOLOGY SHRINKS AFRICA

So there I was, in the middle of the Kalahari, cruising along enjoying the peace of thinking of nothing. Martha and I had made a plan for one Sunday during the trip to communicate with the house group with which she met on that Sunday. So they arranged that when everyone was gathered together in a house in Cape Town, she would try to call me on her cell phone. She would then put her phone on speaker so I could talk to the whole group who had the week before worked hardily in making copies of the *BRL* dvds that were taken to Namibia by Malvin and Denville.

As I was wandering down a road in Botswana dodging cows and goats, my Blackberry rang, and there they all were over 1,000 miles away in a house talking to me in the middle of Botswana. One of the sisters said, “You are a cowboy out

there.” I said to all that I was and they had their laugh. It was quite encouraging for me to talk to all of them about what great things God was doing among the nations.

Times have sure changed. Paul would have been amazed. In years past I remember being gone for four weeks without even a whisper back home to Martha, for there was no means of communication. That was the way it was. But on this trip, Martha and I text and talk back and forth two, three or four times a day. Martha once texted, “We don’t talk to one another this much when you are home.” What can I say. (Wait a minute, I am writing this note in Ghanzi, Botswana. I think I will text Martha.)

“TOO OLD TO WORRY ABOUT MONEY”

In the area of finances I have become Martha forty years ago and she has become me back in those days of frugal poverty. The women of some of the independent churches in Namibia kept begging me to bring Martha along to teach the ladies. These were women of churches that never had contact with evangelists and their wives, especially in cultures where women too often take a back seat to the men, a seat that was far in the back. The women, therefore, wanted to hear from other godly women concerning spiritual matters.

So at every stop there was the plea, “Bring your wife so she can teach us. We need teaching.” But they did not realize that after two back surgeries and a neck surgery, the traveling days for Martha had almost come to an end. But after two weeks of pleas from spiritually desperate women, I phoned Martha and asked if she could buy a plane ticket and meet me in Windhoek, Namibia after I passed through Zimbabwe, Zambia and Botswana. She thought it was a great idea at the time.

So after few days I was able to make contact with her again after she had gone to the travel agent



Incoming teacher from South Africa. Martha was on this plane, and thus, we were a team again in the field as many women in Namibia had requested that she come and teach.



Women of several churches in both Keetmanshoop and Luderitiz, Namibia called to South Africa in order to persuade Martha to come and teach. Women of all religious groups were asked by the Lagos Family Church to come and hear the visiting speaking from South Africa. The meeting hall was packed out.



Martha speaking to ladies and teaching the gospel.

to check in on the cost of the ticket. But she seemed somewhat disappointed at the price of the ticket. She said, “Being a good steward would make the cost of the flight too expensive.” Well, that was not good enough for me because I kept hearing the pleas of those desperate women who wanted a woman to come talk to them about spiritual matters. In fact, one of the women called Martha twice in Cape Town to get her to come. So I reminded Martha that she had been working day after day for the past four months and needed the break, and besides,” I said, “We are too old to worry about money in matters as this. Buy the ticket and come on. I will meet you in Windhoek after I pass through Botswana.” She bought the ticket and we met and she taught. And there were a lot of happy women who experienced her teaching.

While in Ondangwa staying with the Thomas family, I learned something about happy marriages. Because of illness, Festus had resigned from his job several years ago. His wife worked as a nurse to support him in his evangelistic work. He would go from village to village to start churches. On the second day there, the good wife asked if I needed any clothes washed, to which I immediately responded, “Yes!” So the clothes were washed and dried. As I sat in the living room I noticed Festus in the corner ironing the clothes. I said, “Festus, I can do that.” His wife immediately responded, “No, he’s my ‘boy’ now.” After we all finished laughing I learned that a good marriage has a husband who is a woman’s “boy.” So when Martha arrived, I was her “boy” to take her here and there for appointments to speak. After three weeks of running here and there trying to meet appointments for myself, I must confess that the reversal of roles was quite a relief. I was her “boy,” . . . and still am.

THOSE WERE THE DAYS

I sat at the Backpackers house in Windhoek, Namibia and heard the drone of airplanes leaving the nearby airport to shuttle tourists throughout the country. As I sat there one plane took off, reached altitude, and then made a straight shot to where I had just come. And hour later he would be at his destination from which I had just driven. It took me eight hours to make the trip and his tourist will have made it in an hour.

You know that I yearned for the days when I flew Africa. In the West Indies I was doing five to ten seminars a month by flying from one country to another. For the six years here in Africa I flew Africa throughout the early to mid 90s. For those six years one can only imagine how many millions of potholes I flew over in defiance. Those were the days.

When I flew Africa back in those days I remember calculating the time saved by subtracting flying hours to destinations from driving hours to the same destination. On average, I saved 30 days of time a year by flying and not driving. Now I

am catching up on the driving time . . . and the potholes. Only today at my age, it seems like those potholes are bigger and rougher than back in those days.

ENCOUNTER OF THE COMMON KIND

Martha arrived from Cape Town on Wednesday afternoon on a very delayed flight. Denville and Malvin arrived the same day from Upington, South Africa after meeting and planning with a Bible school there concerning the use of the STBS curriculum. We had only Wednesday evening as an opportunity to encounter one another at “Melitus” before heading on in different directions the next day.

There is no greater meeting with disciples than to meet after different parties have had “mountain top” experiences on the same page. We are almost envious of the 70 disciples who returned to Jesus in Luke 10 after going on a preaching tour throughout Palestine. Malvin and Denville had met with church leaders in Upington, and then with other leaders in Windhoek the evening before we met at a campsite south of Windhoek. I had been on the road for exactly three weeks. We sure had our experiences to share. It was a scenario of three excited evangelists who seemed to have insufficient time to share with one another. Denville, Malvin and I are just odd when it comes to being with one another. We have no right to complain about women in reference to their multiplicity of words. We have some unexplainable



Swakomund, Namibia . . . a little Germany in Africa

bond that lends itself to carrying on with one another in unceasing chatter about the work of God.

After our Wednesday encounter, both in the late evening hours and early morning, all of us had to be on our way to different destinations. Malvin and Denville headed north to meet with two STBS directors who had already started their first classes. These were STBSs that were started by men who had established networks of churches out of Khorixas and Opuwo, places I visited three weeks before to introduce the concept. Denville and Malvin's visit moved all of us into the next phase of ministering the word of God to Namibia. It was the phase of servicing existing STBSs. This was all new to us, but as we ventured into the unexplored future with the mission of STBSs, our role will be as invited teachers to existing schools, which part I played for the first time in Ondangwa with the STBS there.

(At the time, I received a message from Festus Thomas, the director of the Ondangwa school, that they were already into teaching their second course. Festus had started a network of 21 churches. He related to me that a network of 14 Jehovah Witness churches had been talking with him about "coming over." He would later let me know how this goes.)

Malvin, Denville and I must confess that it is certainly rewarding to hand over a Bible school to others by providing a curriculum. The local folks organize, teach, administrate and do everything else that is involved in conducting such a school. All we do is provide the curriculum and encouragement. (I have written a paper on the biblical foundation principles for STBSs. If anyone would like to have a copy of this study, please let me know. The document is part of the introductory package we present when helping others understand what we are trying to restore in discipleship that we read about in the New Testament.)

SERENDIPITY!

Why do some doors open, but you often fail to see them open? Martha asked how many I thought would be at the first regional ladies class that she would teach in Keetmanshoop. I was somewhat pessimistic, and said if there were fifteen I would be happy, for it was a first in the region where the hosting church was making an effort to promote unity among churches by inviting members of all churches to join in Bible studies. In preparation for the meeting they used only their cellphones



Get three evangelists together on an exciting mission and you are destined for long hours into the night and rejoicing over what God is doing. Malvin and Denville are working in numerous areas promoting and servicing STBSs. They have dedicated themselves to this new mission where they can expand their influence and teaching to thousands.

to let others know that their was a “foreigner” passing through town who could teach on a Thursday night. All of us were overwhelmed with joy when the meeting hall as packed for the two-hour meeting on a workday night.

Martha has really come into her own on lecturing to ladies. This hidden talent of hers has emerged in late life to the point that her husband is somewhat proud of her as he unknowingly stands outside the synagogue and listens in. Afterward, I said to her that I do not know why God has opened so many doors for us in late life as her teaching and the STBSs. This should have happened twenty years ago. We now have a real ministry to all religious groups who have opened the door to us to come in and teach their folks who are struggling to know the Bible. A whole world of outreach has opened up to us outside the box where we can once again be true evangelists going from one “synagogue” to another teaching the word of God to those who are pleading for a teacher to come to them. After one presents his or her teaching, it is hard to walk away from those who plead that you return to teach more. When you know that you will physically not be able to return, you cry inside, wondering who will come. And now you know the deep seated reason why I write. This is the power of the *Teacher’s Bible* and the 45 books printed in one volume we call the *Biblical Research Library*, as well as the *Biblical Research Library* disk. Because it seems that no one else is coming, at least we can leave a lifetime of teaching for those who are searching.

(Festus Thomas related to me that when they first received the *Biblical Research Library* volume, “the wife would just read to us into the late hours of the night.” He said that one evening they started reading with such fascination that they noticed that the sun was coming up. How can I in these words explain such thirst for the word of God.



A teacher prepares for an open door that few people have. Throughout my trip in visiting numerous religious groups, all wanted a woman teacher. What a call! Martha sits and prepares for opportunities to teach women who are hungering and thirsting after the word of God. Is God using this one person to bring many to the word of God?



I do have a fascination for sunsets. But as I experienced this sunset the last night of my four-week trip, I could not help but think that this would be the last sunset many would experience without having the opportunity of hearing the gospel. The February/March trip made a life-changing impact on me. It was a specific trip to reach religious leaders of all persuasions. God delivered by opening the door for the STBS beyond my imagination. Before I left I said to Martha that if we could get two STBS started, I would be happy. At our last count six were started with the possibility of five more starting in the near future. God is GREAT!

BACK TO THE ISOLATED CITY

Luderitz is a desert city on the southern coast of Namibia. It is a three and a half hour drive across the Kalahari that spills into the Namib Desert, which is as the Atlantic beach extended inland for miles. No one really wants to live in Luderitz. Only those who work for the fishing and diamond industry live there against their will. It is one of those unique settlements of the world that has been condemned to its environment. The only thing that can be done is be religious at one of the many churches among the people.



Ever want to know what a roadside park is like in the middle of the desert? On the road to Luderitz, Namibia one can experience total peace and quiet by stopping at the only shaded place in the region.

You can understand why, therefore, the small group that was meeting in a house in Luderitz wanted Martha to come and teach, plus a second visit from me to be with the men. So at the conclusion of my teaching trip, Martha and I went to the forsaken city on our way back to Cape Town.

Before I left on the four-week trip, I received a letter in the mail from Natangwe Tomas. I have no idea how he obtained our address. But in the letter he simply said, would it be possible for you to come our way on your trip. Since I had not been to Luderitz for fifteen years, I thought, “Why not.” It turned into being one of those “Acts 19” visits where Paul found certain disciples in Ephesus. Natangwe had worked for eleven years with a company in the town. His wife, Corban, also worked for a small company. What revealed their sincerity was the fact that they paid for keeping Martha and me in a lodge, as they did on my first trip. They invited as many ladies as possible for teaching. They fed us, encouraged us as much as we did them. This was a group of no more than a few disciples trying to do their best to serve the Lord. When we left, I felt that we had truly come into contact with disciples of Jesus.

WHEN TO GO HOME

When one has been on the road in African long enough to start looking like his passport picture, then it is probably time to start remembering where home is. And when home seems to be a distant memory, then it is time to go. Africa will do this to those who always seem to be chasing their primordial origins. It is simply a mystique that no one seems to be able to explain. But it is there in the deepest crevasses of the Caucasian innate being.

Africans have never really understood this about the “white man.” He calls home the bush to which the Western traveler seeks to enjoy. While Africa seeks to climb out of the bush, and make for himself a better life, the Western traveler is

passing him up going in the opposite direction on a road to “darkest Africa.” Western and African cultures are simply going in two different directions on this road. But then, the Western traveler knows that this is only a travel experience and he can easily return to the world that the developing world inhabitants also seek to enjoy. The western traveler can always go home. The African is often stuck in a time warp of economic disadvantage.

COMING TO A CLOSE

I carried with me on my odyssey a small computer (HP Mini). If the early explorers of Africa had such a luxury I am sure we would have been left with volumes of books on an Africa that no longer exists. I have a collection of about one hundred books in my library on Africa. I have given all my 7,000 book library away to brethren across this continent except for these few books. These books on Africa I treasure. When I am old, feeble and confined, maybe I will read them again. But then, some are classics and first editions, worth about \$100 to \$300 each. Maybe I will need to sell them to support Martha and me in our old age.

During the last two days of our trip, Martha and I had the privilege of not having any appointments. So we meandered back home. And there is nothing like roaming Africa. I had little desire to return home since there was waiting for me a



So you want to go on a trip to Namibia and endlessly drive down roads as this? Really?

mountain of stress. Seventy-five tons of paper from Finland would be landing to print 20,000 *Teacher's Bibles*. Five tons will have been ordered and delivered from the mill for the printing of the textbooks and manuals for the STBS. Ten thousand STBS brochures will have been delivered to the office in order to put together the Information Pack for the STBS. Because of the requests of the STBS directors I would have to put into a booklet all the introductory material of the STBSs. We needed to add all the revisions for the upcoming printing of the *Teacher's Bible*. Then there was the request by everyone with whom we talked concerning the STBS the developed of a Second Term of ten courses. This would be a four month project. And then there are the hundreds of emails with which to deal. I said to Martha, "I don't want to go home."

But how best to spend my last night of four weeks on the road than camping at the Strandfontein beach on the west coast of South Africa, watching the sun set lazily fall over the western horizon. In the coolness of the evening, Martha and I laid down our heads, praying that we have been a blessing to others. Jehoshaphat "did that which was right in the eyes of the Lord" by sending out the priests and Levites throughout the land to teach the Bible to the people. We feel that we have done that, and in the future, will continue to do so until the spirit leaves us as only clods of dirt that will pass from history. We want to be able to say to the Lord when everything is said and done, "We gave it our best shot."

FOUR-WEEKS OF WORK

God preserves us for greater things. I said to Martha that I wondered why God opens doors when we are in our latter times of ministry. Maybe it is because he never wants us to give up on doing the work. Maybe it is only when we are in bonds in prison and we can say in the past tense, "I have fought the good fight."

I was pacing the floor in Cape Town for the weeks it took me to set up the appointments for the February/March trip. It just takes a long time to make contact with prospective destinations, and then arrange those destinations in an orderly manner by which people know when you will show up. It is not like jumping in a vehicle and heading out. It took me three months to set up the blitz February/March trip. I once did a five month trip through Africa and it took me one year to set up that trip. If such blitz trips are going to be successful, a great deal of time must be spent in planning. But today, the planning is made so much easier by email. Back in the earlier days, it was all by writing letters. Since those days, cellphones and email have arrived, and believe me, it is so much easier to plan and execute such trips.

After the trail dust settled after this trip, here are some of the things that were accomplished by the grace and help of God:

Cities visited for outreach: **Namibia:** Assenklor, Keetmanshoop, Luderitz, Mariental, Rehobath, Walvis Bay, Swakomund, Khorixas, Opuwo, Ondangwa, Rundu, Gobabis, Aus. **Botswana:** Kasani, Ghanzi. **Zimbabwe:** Victoria Falls. **Zambia:** Kalomo

Keep in mind that these were centers for having the meetings of area wide church leaders. The list would be multiplied many times over if I mentioned the cities from which representative church leaders came to attend the meetings conducted in these cities. In all, I was able to meet with over 170 church leaders to talk about the Short Term Bible School ministry, as well as the distribution of the *Teacher's Bible* and *Biblical Research Library* disk.

Brochures in P.O. Boxes: For those cities that I passed through, but did not have a planned meeting with church leaders, I stuffed the P.O. Boxes at the Post Office with the International Bible Institute STBS brochure. I will not know the results of this until after about a month. Of the cities mentioned above, these cities included: Mariental, Rehoboth, Katima Mulilu and Gobabis. Malvin and Denville also stuffed the P.O. Boxes in Karasburg.

Literature Distribution: The focus of this trip was to take only sample literature to be distributed to church leaders during the meetings. I distributed samples of the Course 101 textbook (*Finding the Priceless Pearl*) to about 400 people. Fifty people received the book *A Call For Restoration*. In order for leaders to continue their understanding of the concept of STBS, all the information was placed on the *Biblical Research Library* disk. I distributed 1,200 *BRL* disk. Twelve samples of the *Teacher's Bible* and *Biblical Research Library* were also distributed.

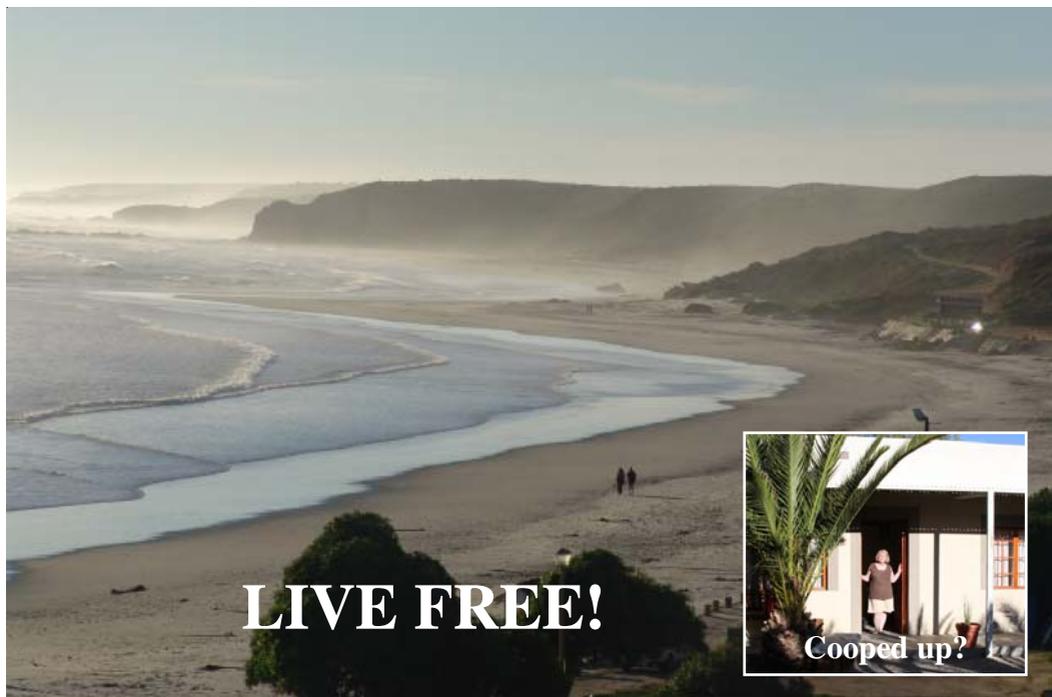
Any time a trip as this is made, one can only wait until the trickle down effect starts to make its way back to the office in Cape Town. We do know that STBSs were started in Ondangwa, Luderitz, Keetmanshoop, Khorixas and Opuwo. We asked that others read through the Course 101 textbook and all the textbook material that is on the *BRL* disk. Before one starts to build the barn, they need to know as leaders what barn they are building. It is for this reason that we will not know the full impact of the trip until many months from now. We have introduced the concept and the material, now we must wait and see what God will do. Since almost all the religious groups we contacted have a "faith only" theology in reference to salvation, it will be interesting to see what impact all the reading of the material will do that teaches that our faith must respond to the gospel of Jesus' death, burial and resurrection, which response is joining with Jesus on the cross, accompanying Him to the grave, and then, rejoicing with Him in the resurrection. So we pray that God

brings forth fruit from our labors . . . and heals us of our pothole battered bones.

HIT THE BEACH

Martha and I have this disagreement. To her, and probably most women, she likes to hold up in some chalet where the food is cooked, beds are made and floors cleaned without her having to lay a hand to such tasks. Now me on the other hand, am this cowboy who likes the open range. Put me under a tree in open spaces where I can walk around, see the sun rise and set, and you have a contented man. I am not one for being couped up in a small room where I can hear the neighbors doing whatever they do next door. I will take the risk of a few bugs, bees and beast, along with some creepy crawling things, as a way to get away.

So we compromise. On our way home, it was one night in the coop and one night free on the Strandfontein beach of western South Africa. I could lay my head down at night and watch the sunset over the restless waves of the Atlantic Ocean. As they lapped against the beach below us, we both dozed off to sleep at 8:30 in the evening, just like old people. It was great. You must ask Martha if she liked the serenity of the moment, or the night before when we were couped up in a chalet room. She never gave me an answer.



LIVE FREE!

Cooped up?

**So where would you stay?
(I promise, you will not settle this difference of opinion.)**

Epilogue

I must add this epilogue in reference to my travels alone in Africa. When I was pacing the floor in Cape Town, ready to go, Martha said, “GO! You don’t need anyone to go with you. You never have. You can go and do the job on your own!” So what more does a traveling evangelist need from his wife.

When I would arrive at a particular place, the usual question was, “Are you alone?” “Well,” I said, “Not really. I still believe what Jesus said. ‘Lo, I am with you even to the end of the age.’”

Jesus also promised that those who leave, father, mother, sons, daughters, lands and houses would receive a hundredfold in this world. I can witness to the true and fulfillment of this promise. On this particular trip I was reminded again that I have houses, fathers, mothers, daughters and sons throughout Africa. I was cared for wherever I went. Sometimes, if a house was too small, the local folks would put me up in a hotel. My clothes were washed, I was fed beyond capacity. Sometimes, when I headed out for another destination, the folks would take me to the local petrol station, fill up my vehicle, and send me on my way. I stayed in rooms in houses that were prepared for me, taken out to eat, and prepared steaks and stuff about which I never asked questions. Maybe it was that everyone wanted to take care of an old white haired man they thought did not have enough sense to travel with someone else on such journeys. But even in my younger days, I can testify that Africa is extremely hospitable to strangers. I have never lacked for anything in my travels. Once the local folks realized that I would sleep under a tree, they felt comfortable about taking care of me. When they saw that I would sleep in the back of my vehicle instead of the comforts of a hotel, then they realized that what they offered was anything above the back of a truck. I must confess that I enjoy the hospitality of Africa.

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