

## Encounter with Lions!

January 27/2022

The reports coming to me this month have me remembering the old gospel song, 'The circuit riding preachers traveled through the mire and mud'. When the Lord impressed us that the Pastors must visit all the groups and baptize all the dear folk who have been waiting, some a long while, for the chance to go forward in baptism, the Pastors bravely headed out on the big tour. We knew there were many, but it has turned out bigger than we even dreamed! Almost a thousand dear souls taking their stand for Jesus and His truth! So many we ran out of printing supplies to provide each of them their Baptismal Certificates and hope, with the Lord's blessing, to be able to get the supplies soon, print the certificates and send them out to the group elders to be passed to the new members. This letter features an adventure from the baptism tour and an item the Hatfield Elder shared with us. The first story took place 2 days ago, Jan. 27 and is written by our 2 Pastors. We are grateful to all friends of the Mission who remember us in your prayers and our faithful partners who sacrifice, sharing means to keep the work going forward. We keep you in our prayers; May the Lord richly bless each of you and your loved ones.



The stranded min-bus; missing bridge and the river they had to cross.

## Encounter With Lions!

I praise the Lord for His grace! The Pastors were on their way to the final group on the Baptismal Tour. I will place the 2 photos they sent with this story on the Mission Site. I will send it as written to me by our 2 pastors First, Young Pastor Maxwell;

"Hi there; Brother insisted that I must write to you right away. We are now safe and arrived well. Now as you can see, it was a troublesome journey to come, the road is badly damaged with rain and we came to a point where our minibus could not proceed. We had to finish on foot or return. We agreed

with other people that were in this minibus with us, that we should proceed on foot, even though we were some 40 km away and had to take short cuts along forests to make the journey easy. We took it. Main reason why the minibus could not go along was because here the bridge had been totally swept away, and there was no way it could carry on. So we had to hold hands and form a human chain and cross the [raging] shallow water with faith that no Crocs would attack us. There were 18 people in the mini bus, most remained behind in fear, but pastor asked people to kneel and pray, and led the way into the water to cross, with a stick measuring depth as we crossed. Only seven had the courage, [to go with us]the rest remained behind, not sure of their fate. I had a prayer in the heart, and as we walked and walked into the thick forest, we were guided by another man that 'knew the way'; they were four men and three women. Somehow as we were walking we heard some movements. Like someone pressed a pause button for us, we all stood still and looked, and we saw some fat beautiful brown animals like puppies come to us. They looked happy and curious, as they were coming. Before we all even processed at what we were seeing, one man whispered, 'they are Lions.' I felt my heart thump me, and I sweated instantly. Pastor simply said, everyone still, don't move! The 'puppies' got closer to us in curiosity, they looked harmless, but then from nowhere the mother big lion, brown like, appeared. It stood still looking at its puppies as they got closer to us. It was like ten meters away, I swear I saw fire in its eyes and I think I wasn't even breathing with fear. Pastor kept saying, "Stand still", he whispered, Stand still several times. I assure you, turning never came into my mind. I was not in my body, the other men kept saying 'nhasi tazofa, ko midsimu yatirasirei', meaning 'Today we die, the gods have abandoned us!' But pastor kept whispering, "Stand still, pray, well, while our eyes were fixed upon the puppy lions and the mother that was some ten few meters away from us, two of the four puppies advanced to us, they got real close to sniffing some of us. Pastor kept whispering, "Hold your ground, stand still." I didn't know what to do, I didn't know anything, I was frozen. The rest of the people were like statues, except one man that kept muttering, 'Today we die, gods have left us'. Well as if this wasn't enough, behind us, appeared a huge, grey like hairy lion, huge one with long hairs around its neck. I did not know that there are grey lions, it was huge, and it came to us, and though it was a meter away from us, it just looked at us. At that point even pastor was silent and we did not move. I felt my hairs standing on one end. Moving on and on, the mother lion moved some few steps towards us, and the curios cubs ran to her, she walked away like did not even care for us, but the grey like hairy one remained for a minute or so. It did not make any sound, it just looked at us with it's scary eyes and turned to look away and looked at us like again for a few times and looked away, then it just walked away. We looked at it till it vanished into the woods, we stood still and in silence. After some minutes, when the lions have gone, pastor sat down right there, and one lady fainted, the other began to cry, one man had accident in his pants. I became weak, and yes, pastor prayed to thank God. I am trembling now that I thought of it. I don't think I will sleep today. When we told the people here, they told us that we should not have had taken that short cut. What surprised us the most is that even the man that led us that way, knew that it's a lion infested area but only said when we arrived, that he knew lions roam in that area but had never thought we could have an encounter with them. I am heavily disturbed. Sister Tanatswa [Our Church Bible Teacher] cried when she heard the story. We could not even baptize people today, we had a night service and pastor told the story that God brought us here for a purpose to baptize, and we shall do so. We went and saw the chief, and he will be witnessing the baptism as well. I don't know what else to say, I saw what I never even imagined I would see!"

Then Pastor Ticharwa: “We had a crazy journey here, but I saw the hand of the Lord in the journey! I just remembered how the Lord made me cross a flooded river in Rocklands some time back, and not even noticed there was a river; I remembered how I survived face off with a deadly cobra; I remembered how a Range Rover was sent to rescue us the desperate night I was abandoned by the bus, and today the Lord spared our lives from the lions! We met lions on the way, and yes, the moment was intense; I did not feel afraid or what, I just knew that God was in control, we had prayed for this journey, you were praying for us, and I knew the mission was not going to end that way, at least not for now, so I had a silent prayer in my heart! And if I ever believed that Daniel slept all night in the lion's den, I promise you it makes more sense to me now than ever! I know and yea, God can do all sorts of things; lion cubs played on our feet, the lioness did not get closer to us but watched at a distance, one with a grey like back, should be the male lion, got close enough to sniff us, and stood there for a moment, but did no harm, nor roared. We could see from its eyes the viciousness of the beast, but nothing happened to us. After that we safely arrived to tell the tale, some people cried thanking God for saving our lives, but the greatest question I asked them, is “Why would God save me to come to you, if He does not have a plan with your lives?” I am grateful for what God has done and I must bring a thanks offering to God. Am so empowered by this! Amen and glory to God. Amen!!! All we can say is, “Praise the Lord!”

**Testimony from one of the Church Elders:** “Well I keep smiling to know that we shall meet in heaven one day. It is a good thing, when I tell people that most of the mission leaders have never been in Africa, neither do they know us, people find it hard to believe at times, because the results of the work shows like the Owner of the mission is always there leading daily. [He is certainly, as only the Lord leads this Mission!] Thousands of churches are formed and die along the year every time. But this one, has no miracle-prophet leading, and yet coordinated and steadily growing. It may be one of the poorest churches in the country but one that is growing well. I praise God for that, I am so excited with the new baptized members.”

Baptismal Tour Adventure of January 20:



Stuck in the mud! Ooops! Something missing Here!

The Pastors were serving first the group at Chiyadzwa, then proceeding on to Rafingora! Pastor Reports: "We had 51 in Chiyadzwa ready, then we took the bus to Rafingora, we didn't spent time so we were able to catch one, but it made several U-turns looking for a better road, one bridge was totally under water and the bus could not make it across. And the other road was totally slippery and muddy and we had to finish the last 11 km on foot with many others, when the bus sank and couldn't proceed. Bus was trapped we couldn't proceed on it and we had to walk.

There we baptized 46 to make a total of 97 people baptized. And we returned and arrived a few minutes ago, we are so tired and sleepy. Here is a pic of the bridge, not sure how they will appear to you as I received them from a fellow we met on the bus who had a phone with power, so asked him to sent us on that messenger app. This is the normal road we were to use but was not able to use it, they chose a different path than to risk crossing it or sleeping there waiting for the water to lower, the road we passed with our Range Rover some time back (smiling)" Now I received this report on the bridge they used to leave Rafingora; this was the very next day after the Baptism and the bridge was impassable. They have tried repairs, but looks like the only transport will be rafts for a while! Our Pastors were grateful they did not get stuck there! Keep Praying! Going forward in faith!



Impassible!



Looks mighty shaky!