

# Missions Untangled

Released by God's Calling



Dr. William J. Fuller, III

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ISBN: 978-1-940725-61-1



## Dedication

I dedicate this book to my wife Bev of thirty-five years. Finding her was like finding a needle in a haystack. Her dedication to missions is the same as mine, and I appreciate and love her so much because of it and because of so much more. I follow on her coat-tails often, especially in the school ministries, children's crusades, and women's conferences. It always warms my heart to hear the children cry out, "Mama B! Mama B!" – Bev's village name – as we pass villages or schools on the way to other ministries. People think the world of her on the mission field and at home. It makes ministry so much easier when you have a life and ministry partner like her with so many talents and a deep commitment to Christ. She makes up for my weaknesses and agrees to let me pinch-hit for hers. God has truly blessed me with a tremendous gift: my wife Bev.



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## Introduction

The purposes of this book are threefold:

- 1). It will give an accurate account of the story of our missions' experience. People oftentimes tell me that newsletters and slideshows do not give the full picture of our ministry. I can't describe it in one sitting because of time constraints, and I would leave out key details in shortening it. So this book is the answer. My journals have helped to write it to include the important details of our experiences and ministry.
- 2). This book can also be used as a resource for people who are considering full-time careers as foreign missionaries. It is not a totally comprehensive guide but can be used to supplement other resources. This is both a reality check to include the encouraging and discouraging aspects of a career as missionary.
- 3). Lastly, it will act as a guide for people who have never committed their lives to Christ and desire to do so. Whether in the United States or abroad, the Bible has the same guidance in all areas of our lives. Commitment to Christ is the place to start.





## Our Calling

To determine your success on the foreign mission field, you must seek God regarding your calling. “Therefore my brothers and sisters, make every effort to confirm your calling and election” (2 Peter 1:10). I knew at the early age of seven that God would one day call me to a long-term placement on the foreign mission field. How did I know this at such a young age? A missionary came to my church and made such an impact on me that I asked him to send me his monthly newsletter. I can remember the excitement every month when it arrived as I read it and gazed at the pictures imagining that it was me on the foreign field. Although I didn’t know it at the time, I had a reading disability and therefore would rather do anything other than read something. But these newsletters captured my attention even above playing the sport I loved – football. God was sowing the seeds of interest for missions in my life even at this early age. My advice to everyone is to notice your or your child’s interests and aptitudes, because they may lead to a career in the future. Conversely, if people dread the mission trips and are doing them just to follow in their parents’ footsteps or to get the praise of men, they have missed their calling and should not proceed in that direction of full-time missions.

At age twenty-six I felt God was saying to leave my father’s successful business. I had been there for six years working most of the jobs throughout the manufacturing environment. He had saved the company for me for over

twenty-five years and was heart-broken when I left. But I knew that this was not the plan God had for me, as He revealed it through many people and circumstances that were “too coincidental” to be brushed aside. I disliked disappointing my father and mother, but my top priority was God, while family was second. Two years after I left, dad sold the company. Ten years later my mother thanked me for having the courage to leave. She said that my father was finally free to travel and was having the time of his life now that the responsibility of the company was off of his shoulders. Had I stayed in the business, my sons would have been in their early twenties, too early to run the company, when I had the call to missions. It would have made it that much more difficult to follow God in that case.

Another possible career opportunity that God removed was my plan to open Karate studios. This also would have been difficult to leave for the mission field had I stayed with it. In my early 20s I earned my black belt and taught Karate at a local junior college and area high school. I also fought in a few tournaments. The meditation that I practiced where you completely clear your mind was definitely not from God. My high school history teacher who originally led me to Christ warned me that anything I centered my life around other than Jesus would not give me the fulfillment in life that I was seeking. He was right! I eventually was not satisfied with Karate as it did not fill the emptiness I felt inside that only Jesus can fill. I thank God that I tore a muscle in my upper leg that forced me to quit. I saw the writing on the wall as it kept tearing even after giving it a six-month rest.

I began venturing out on short-term mission trips to Haiti at age twenty-nine and later went on many trips to Nicaragua

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to fulfill my interest and to test my calling. Each time God stirred my heart with a burden to challenge the people to commit their lives to Christ and start a relationship with Him. This stoked my fire for missions on each trip, increasing my interest in the foreign mission field.

The acid test for my calling to missions came when I asked the girl of my dreams to marry me. Thank goodness she said yes. Shortly after the proposal and engagement, it dawned on me that she had better have a heart for missions or it would never work. I could not drag her to the mission field if she did not want to go. So, sheepishly, I apologized to her for forgetting to mention my life-long dream to be a missionary and how she would need to agree to the mission field if we were to be married. If she did not agree, I knew that I would have to break off the engagement, and I told her so. Thankfully, she agreed that if God led us to the mission field, she would go. We were married in 1982, and less than one year later I was off to Haiti for ten days to help build a church school.

On that trip I got deathly sick from some bad water, and that reaffirmed to Bev and me that the foreign mission field was not going to be easy. I believe, though, that if you are definitely called by God to be a missionary, you will have a greater tolerance for overcoming sickness, disappointment, loneliness, frustration, etc. He will give you the strength to overcome these temporary setbacks in keeping your eyes on the goal of getting people to commit their lives to Christ. A short memory of these setbacks is also helpful as the apostle Paul affirmed this in Philippians 3:14: "One thing I do: Forgetting what is behind [namely all of his failures or setbacks] and straining toward what is ahead, I press on toward the goal to win the prize for which God has

called me heavenward in Christ Jesus”.

It is one thing to be touched by all of the fantastic things you experience on a mission trip and quite another to actually move abroad with your wife, leaving your children and other family members behind. That is why the miraculous birth of my first son took me over the edge to tell God, “I am all in! Wherever you want me to go I will go, and whatever you want me to do I will do it.” It all started in 1984 when a friend came to me asking me to sponsor him for a \$700 round-trip plane ticket from Cincinnati to Switzerland for a short-term mission trip. In response I said that I couldn’t, because I was selling commercial real estate strictly on commission, and I did not have the extra money. Then the thought came to my mind to raise the money for him by renting out a hotel conference room and charge admission to hear a prominent Christian speaker give his testimony. We did so and raised the exact \$700 my friend needed that night.

Later that year my wife was in the hospital expecting our first child. At 1:30 p.m. on October 16, 1984 a tremendous fear came over me that I thought was a warning from God. He seemed to say in His still, quiet voice in my mind that my son was ready to be born but was having complications and might not be born alive. I prayed fervently in my mind for God to intercede and let my son be born without any issues. I did not tell my wife so as not to worry her. At 2:30 p.m. my son John was born healthy and without any complications. At the time I reasoned that the feelings I had were probably common for first time fathers. I reasoned that the warning I thought that was from God was actually just my imagination and not a message from God after all. Two months later I found out differently. Upon returning

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from Switzerland, my friend called me first thing. He asked when my son was born and I said October 16 at 2:30 p.m. An excitement filled his voice as he exclaimed, “Oh, that is exactly what I thought!” He went on to explain how that night as they were sitting down for dinner (Switzerland was six hours ahead of Cincinnati’s time), God impressed on each of the missionaries to stop eating and to pray for my son who was having complications being born that could result in his death. They did so at exactly 1:30 p.m. Cincinnati time; at 2:30 p.m. Cincinnati time God told them that John was born without any issues and they could stop praying. Upon hearing this, tears began running down my face, as I knew God had performed a miracle for us. In response, I told God I would follow Him the rest of my life wherever and whenever He led me, and I meant it.

When we were pondering going to the mission field, John had wondered away from God years earlier. I wondered if I should stay in Tampa to try to lead him back to Christ or go to where God was calling us. It was heart-wrenching. A Christian mentor friend told me at the time to trust God with him and do what God was telling me to do – move to the foreign mission field – and God would take care of bringing my son back to Him in God’s timing. In 2015, after three years on the mission field, that is exactly what happened. One day while we were in Africa, I received a call from John. My first thought was, Oh no, is he involved in a catastrophe? Surprisingly, he told me, with a lively excitement in his voice, that he had returned to following God. He was even helping with the youth at church. Tears began running down my cheeks, as I knew that God had rewarded our decision to become missionaries. A year later he married a good Christian girl from the same church, and God’s perfect plan for their lives began to thrive. I

presided at their wedding and my other son's wedding that same year. Thank goodness they did not marry girls from Zambia or I would owe the dowry of three cows each to their brides' families!

In 1988, I entered Bible school to major in missions. I already had an MBA in Finance, so the Dean let me immediately start taking the upper level missions courses. After nine months, I had finished almost all of the required capstone courses and was ready to proceed to the mission field. Our first child, John, was four years old. The doors did not open that I needed to open in order to proceed, so I left the program. I was dejected, feeling that the last nine months were a waste and that I somehow had missed God's calling. God spoke to me, though, assuring me that the last nine months of missions' classes and my praying for two hours most days was not a waste. He seemed to say that now was not the right time but that I would use my new missiology knowledge in the future.

Twenty-four years later God led us to the mission field and brought that training to fruition. I can't complain about the delay because God knew when my wife and my sons were ready for this commitment to missions. After all, if it took Jesus thirty years to begin His ministry, which it did, why should I complain about waiting fifty years since God first spoke to me at age seven? God's timing is perfect, and I thank God that He closed the door back then. Had He not done so, I would have jumped the gun resulting in failure and frustration. In summary, one of my missions professors at Bible school one day greeted us with a phrase on the chalkboard that said, "The need is the call." He asked all of us if that was true. Most of the students responded enthusiastically, "Yes!" I was one of

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the few who said no. In my reasoning, I mentioned that being a missionary is a hard life and you had better have the call of God for missions or you will never make it. When overwhelming obstacles surround you on the foreign field, you can know that you are in God's plan for your life. It is a tragedy for missionaries to spend such a large sum of money to relocate to the foreign mission field only to decide it was not what they thought it would be. As a result, they return to the United States leaving a bad image in the minds of the nationals and supporters who feel abandoned. My professor agreed with me wholeheartedly.

In Zambia, one of the white farmers asked if we would stay the typical two years other missionaries had stayed. He also said that he has seen two types of missionaries – one who seemed to be there on “easy street,” and the other who worked tirelessly. When I asked him which ones he felt my wife and I were, he responded that we were the ones who worked tirelessly. I also mentioned that the overall strategy of our mission agency was to have their missionaries stay in their placement for five years and to train nationals to take over the area before moving to another location. I always keep in mind that the Bible says God will never leave you nor forsake you (Joshua 1:5), and no weapon formed against us will triumph (Isaiah 54:17). Scriptures gave me faith to proceed, as I know that faith comes from hearing the Word of God (Romans 10:17). Jesus used the Word to refute Satan when He was tempted in the wilderness, and we can use it to refute Satan when he sows doubt in our minds regarding our calling.

In testing your calling, I believe that you should seek confirmations from God that this is definitely His direction for you. Gideon asked God for confirmations that he



was supposed to lead the Israelites to free them from the Midianites. God affirmed His direction with three signs signaling that Gideon would be successful in his quest. I too asked God for multiple confirmations that He wanted us to move to Africa where I felt He was leading us. For the record, we did not tell God to send us anywhere but Africa (like the standard joke goes).

Many confirmations confirmed that this truly was God's will for our lives. First, in 2011, I asked a friend who had an accent where he was born. He mentioned South Africa. I then told him that my hope was one day to be a missionary to Africa. He then mentioned that his father lived in close proximity and that he was a missionary to Africa and India. Upon meeting with him, it became apparent that our mission strategies were not the same. His strategy was to take short-term trips to both countries, but mine was to live in Africa long-term to forge relationships and influence people for Christ. He then suggested that I meet his spiritual son who was president of Overland Missions, a mission agency which placed missionaries in remote areas of Africa, and other countries, long-term. This was not a coincidence; it was a divine appointment orchestrated by God to lead me to this mission agency.

My second confirmation came during a church service in which a missionary to Africa was the guest speaker. She said that she felt God saying to her that He wanted us on the foreign mission field within two years. When I asked where, she said she felt it was Africa, since she saw in her mind's eye a map of Africa that she felt was a sign from God.

My third confirmation occurred at a friend's house who

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had invited a female pastor, who had the gift of prophesy, to conduct a service one Sunday afternoon. 1 Corinthians 12:28 says “And God has placed in the church first of all apostles, second prophets, third teachers...” This refers to a ranking of gifts in the church body. As a prophetess, she was highly esteemed spiritually according to this verse. The Bible explains prophesy further in 1 Corinthians 14:3, “But the one who prophesies speaks to people for their strengthening, encouraging, and comfort.” At the end of the service, she rushed up to my wife and me saying that she could barely finish the service because God was speaking to her emphatically saying that He wanted us on the mission field as soon as possible. She barely knew us and definitely did not know that we were seeking God about becoming missionaries. This sealed the direction in our minds; so in 2011, we contacted Overland Missions about joining them.

Getting advice from my spiritual mentor was very helpful and another confirmation. I voiced a concern as to who would look after my sons spiritually if I went to the mission field. Was that a reason not to go? He then said that God’s guidance takes priority over that concern, and that I should follow His direction to the mission field and trust God regarding my sons. After going to Africa, I was ecstatic to see each of them grow spiritually. Our absence and the testimony of our commitment to Christ made a big impact on them – above any words I could say.

Lastly, I heard God speak to me in His still, silent voice. In the past I have recognized this voice most clearly when I have been close to Him by spending time with Him in reading the Bible, praying, and sitting quietly before the Lord. Combined, these turn up the volume of His guidance.

Conversely, habitual sin that goes unconfessed or failure to obey God's direction in our lives turns down the volume by which we hear His guidance. God says that if we seek Him (or His guidance), He will let us find Him (1 Chronicles 28:9). Following His guidance results in our fulfillment.

In deciding to follow God, especially with such a major commitment, it is important to know that Satan will try to throw roadblocks in your path to stop you. We were no exception to this rule. After making the decision to become missionaries, my wife and I both contracted cancer in October of 2011 and December 2011, respectively. We both had operations, and both cancers were successfully removed. My only question to my doctor was whether I would be ready to go to the next Overland Missions Advance Missions Training in May, 2012, as was required of all of our missionaries. He assured me that I would be ready, and thankfully my wife's recovery was also very quick. In fact, for three days in early January 2012, we both attended the One Tribe Conference, where people find out about Overland Missions.

That was the first step in applying to Overland Missions as a prospective missionary. Realizing that I was 57 and my wife 54, the president of Overland Missions said that he was not sure we were a good fit, since most of their missionaries were in their 20s – youth was an important tool for tasks such as handling the rough roads out in the remote areas. He was also concerned because I had a heart attack in 2000, and cardiology was almost nonexistent in Zambia. Knowing that we had both just been through cancer did not help our case either. He went so far as to offer to refer us to another agency that made short-term trips to Africa. I responded that I knew that our calling

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was a long-term one in Africa and if he did not offer us a placement with Overland Missions, that would be all right, but I would just seek out a placement with another mission agency that would.

I told him that I was sure that God was leading us this way and that I would never hold it against Overland Missions if I became ill on the mission field. What I would hold against myself I said would be if I knew God was leading me to the African mission field for a long-term placement, and I never followed through with it. That being the case, I would consider my life a failure regardless of any secular successes I achieved. This argument made sense to him, and he agreed to let us go through Advanced Missions Training and afterwards he would make his final decision. We did so and he admits that as the training went on, we kept getting stronger in spite of the heat and rigorous schedule. This was an indication to him that we could make it, and he agreed to bring us on board. About one year later we were off to Africa, to find a house to rent in Choma, Zambia, and to purchase camping equipment and a car that would take us to the remote parts of the Siachitema Chiefdom.

The second deterrent to our call to Africa was fear. Before accepting the call of God, I finally made a list of sixteen fears that tried to derail me from God's plan for our lives. I address these in the next chapter. After I listed the sixteen fears, God had finally had enough, and He told me in His still, silent voice to trust Him.

The third negative impacting our positive frame of mind was the reaction of family and friends. Some voiced concern about being able to raise our budget from supporters. Others questioned why, in our mid-fifties, when we should be

accumulating funds for retirement, would we be spending some of it on the foreign mission field? Most feared for our security after hearing of the security issues all over Africa. One person even asked what to do with our bodies if we died in Africa.

Along with these negative obstacles there is what I call a false positive. I once had a nuclear stress test that indicated severe blockages in an artery. I immediately got a heart catheterization, at great expense, only to find out that I was completely normal. The test had given a false positive, a result that said there was a blockage problem when there was not one. Similarly, reactions from church members can give you a feeling of a false positive. You will hear reactions like, “Oh, you are so wonderful and such a great man or woman of God.” Pride can then begin rearing its ugly head. All of a sudden it is you on the spiritual throne instead of God. This becomes a false positive reaffirmation of your calling, which was like the false positive on my nuclear stress test. It is actually a negative in disguise.

Another false positive can be the person who seeks adventure rather than God’s leading to the mission field. This person is typically very good at camping and is considered a “man’s man” but is lacking spiritually. Again, when the struggles start, he is ill equipped spiritually to handle them. In each of these cases hopefully these people realize these false positives before proceeding to the mission field. There they may experience failures and frustrations like electricity brown-outs, sicknesses, house and car maintenance problems, freezing temperatures without heat, language barriers, long lines, thievery, dogs or music regularly interrupting sleep, poor service from vendors, bumpy roads causing back problems, and mosquitoes that cause

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malaria, just to name a few. Otherwise these frustrations will be the catalysts to force people to return to the United States totally exasperated. Successful missionaries have short memories of the challenges and long memories for the commitments to Christ and the healings that result from God working through their ministries.

My calling verse is Romans 15:20, where the apostle Paul states, “It has always been my ambition to preach the Gospel where Christ was not known, so that I would not be building on someone else’s foundation.” In order to fulfill this calling, God matched me with Overland Missions, whose directive is to minister to the unreached in remote areas.

My wife wanted to add her own calling to the mission field, as it is so important that both husband and wife share in God’s mutual purpose for their lives. Here is Bev’s story in the remainder of this chapter....

Every four years the summer Olympics feature numerous running races like sprints, relays, and marathons. As a teen, I loved running competitions, dashing down the track, leaping over hurdles, and anchoring the girls’ relay team. But in 2011, I learned the meaning of enduring a marathon. Along with my diagnosis of breast cancer came this wise counsel: “Becoming a Survivor is not a sprint; it’s a marathon.” Well, becoming a missionary or the wife of a missionary – totally sold-out to God’s calling – is not a sprint; it’s a marathon.

As a wife and eventually the mother of three children, I was hesitant to send my newlywed husband on his first short-term missions trip to Haiti. I consoled myself during his

absence, knowing he was with the team of men from our church. Little did I know, he would accidentally take a gulp of impure local water as a result of his mixing cement and splashing it into his face. What you don't know doesn't hurt you? Wrong. Later hearing of his intense digestive illness made me fearful enough to never accompany him on any of his other missions' ventures to Central America. Each time he returned with another harrowing story (and stories of God's healing miracles, saving grace, and the work of the Holy Spirit), it made me more determined that our children should have at least one parent alive!

Yet I also trusted that my husband had really heard God directing him to the next trip abroad. More than that, I trusted God with his life, both on and off the mission field. Now, you have to understand that being a missionary was what I considered "his thing," not mine. I had grown up in a church that wholly supported world missions. Missionaries came with slides of idol worship, people mutilating their own bodies to atone for their sins, the weird foods they had to eat, and even worse – wearing frumpy old clothes and out-of-date hairstyles. Poor missionaries!

Fast-forward to the start of my Missions Marathon: 2011. Our kids had all finished college, and I had left my career as an elementary teacher to the next generation. I was starting to flounder, though, like a fish out of water. I was trying to find a purposeful life. Very slowly, my husband began to introduce me to a mission based in Africa, namely Overland Missions. Are you kidding? Africa? I thought if we ever became full-time missionaries it would definitely be in Central America.

Halfway through that year, my lesson in marathons began.

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While healing from cancer, my husband continued to open the door to the possibility of becoming Overland Missionaries. We would train in Zambia, Africa, in the spring of 2012. Let's face it: My old life as I knew it was over. God had made me a Survivor for a greater purpose, one that was "not about Me." As the discussion progressed, my husband was all in. But I, as his wife, needed my own personal calling and direction from the Lord. I was not going along for the ride to wash clothes, cook, and tramp about the African bush. If God wanted me by my husband's side as a full-time missionary, then He better give me very purposeful and very clear direction, straight from the throne of God.

A few days before Christmas, 2011, my husband was diagnosed with cancer and required surgery before New Year's. As he was rolled out of the pre-operative area toward the surgical suite, he called out to me, "Remember, the first thing you ask the surgeon in recovery is if I can go to Zambia!"

The surgical nurse in charge of his case was the parent of one of our son's preschool friends from 20 years ago. She and her husband are Christians, and I knew she was an answer to my prayers for emotional support. She told me to go home, and that she would call when I needed to drive back to the hospital. What do you do while you WAIT? You walk out this part of the marathon in prayer and in the Word of God. As I questioned how we both could have cancer surgeries in the same year, the Holy Spirit guided my Bible search to Proverbs 11:30. "The fruit of the righteous is a tree of life, and he who is wise wins souls." (NASB)

In God's perfect timing and His plans for our good, and



not for evil, we each had an early diagnosis of cancer, so the treatments and ensuing healing made our marathons shorter. God was giving us bodies that were now cancer free, so we could be trees of life for Him. He could use us to minister through His Holy Spirit to remote and isolated people groups – especially in Africa. I asked God, “But what do I say to friends and family who question us about retirement, planning for that American dream?” There was my answer, right on the page in front of me: “He who is wise wins souls.” (NASB) In other words, for us to leave the American dream behind and take the route of the marathon before us was wise in God’s plan. Replicating all that God through His Spirit and His Word has taught us would produce fruit in the lives of those we can reach on the mission field. As they are discipled, just as Jesus taught and trained his disciples, these fellow believers can carry the message of God’s love through his son, Jesus Christ, to their villages and throughout their nation.

Because ALL scriptures are inspired by God Himself, my calling for His direction did come straight from the throne of God, as found in Proverbs 11:30. I am an effective missionary, side-by-side with my husband, teaching, preaching, and carrying the Gospel to the nations. Yes, in Africa I do have to hand-wash our clothes and hang them on a line in the sun to dry, cook all meals from scratch, put up with a lot of bugs and very big spiders, and oftentimes deal with the lack of electricity or water. “I will be joyful in the God of my salvation,” Habakkuk 3:18 (NLT) and the eternal salvation of souls to whom God has sent us as missionaries. I fully embrace the marathon of His love to which He has set my feet running! “The Sovereign Lord is my strength! He makes me as surefooted as a deer, able to tread upon the heights.” Habakkuk 3:19 (NLT) (“For the

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choir director. This prayer is to be accompanied by stringed instruments”) (NLT)

## Training and Faith Supersede Fear

Different mission agencies have different training programs to give new missionaries a firm foundation and brief them on what to expect on the mission field. Training is imperative because it can help you accomplish your goals and avoid some of the mistakes common to inexperienced missionaries. Exposure like this also reduces the fear of the unknown. Overland Missions requires all of their missionaries to go through the program called Advanced Missions Training (AMT). It is an intensive three-month training in Bible study, preaching, bush survival techniques, 4x4 driving, cross cultural communications, GPS navigation, fund raising, Farming God's Way basics, auto mechanics, bush cooking, shop, medical training, and cultural training. Additionally, planting the philosophy of servanthood is accomplished, as AMT students live in tents, serve tables, help cook and clean up after meals, and they engage in work projects to keep up the Sub Sahara base outside of Livingstone, Zambia. Three expeditions provide the setting to practice camping and ministry in the villages. The goal is to make AMT students the most well-rounded missionaries possible, exemplifying a servant's heart, a spirit-led walk, and skills enabling them to overcome problems in the field. And believe me, there will be problems in the field. AMT graduates are so well trained that they can go anywhere in the world and be successful. The president of Overland Missions said that AMT would

be our test to see if we could handle this exhausting, intense, and stressful training. We passed the test –and in fact the president said that he noticed that the energy level of those in their twenties and early thirties was depleting as time went on but that ours seemed to increase. He looked at that as confirmation that we could make it and even be very successful in spite of our age and past medical challenges of cancers and a heart attack. I have heard him say many times since then that we are two very good missionaries and that he can't believe he almost passed on us. Neither Bev nor I have been flamboyant or “rock stars” in any of our professional career positions. We have been good at our jobs but not overachievers. Typically most employers would target individuals who are overachievers. The career of missionary is different, though, and the president says that the average “Steady Eddy” (the plodder), not the super star, is the one who typically excels on the mission field.

### The Sixteen Fears

With such a drastic change of career direction, fear is a normal reaction. Dwelling on that fear is not. “For the Spirit God gave us does not make us timid, but gives us power, love and self-discipline” (2 Timothy 1:7). When I was buffeted by fear, it was very disheartening. I eventually made a list of my sixteen fears in going to Africa to try to get them off my mind. They included the following:

1. I get sick on foreign water a lot; can I handle Africa's water?
2. Will the people like and accept us?
3. Where will I find an interpreter for the Tonga language?
4. What is the food like?

5. Will we be safe from robbery and other crimes?
6. Will the many diseases affect us even though we both received eleven shots for immunity?
7. Where do we find a reliable car?
8. My wife has never visited a third-world country, will she be able to handle it and be safe in the ministries?
9. Will the young people being trained with us accept us since we are the age of their parents?
10. Will our sons be all right without us, physically and spiritually?
11. Where are the toilets out in the bush, or are there any?
12. Are the doctors, hospitals, medications, and clinics reliable?
13. How do we handle the witch doctors and demon possession?
14. Will we be able to find an affordable place to live?
15. Will we be able to raise our support needed for living expenses?
16. How long will it take to sell my house in Tampa?

After listing each of these, or similar ones, I prayed about them. God then told me to do something that astounded me. He said to tear them up and to get my mind off of myself, trust him, and then he could finally use us. I did just that and a peace from the Holy Spirit engulfed me. Fears from Satan still slip back in my mind occasionally so I then have to again fight them. I have found that the key here is to search for Jesus with all our hearts, putting my and Bev's self-considerations aside and truly seeking God's guidance. I do this early in the morning along with Bible study and prayer. If I miss a day, I am more irritable

and prone to concentrate more on fear. I reinforce in my prayers that God knows our needs and where we can be most effective and thus the happiest.

Jesus refuted Satan three times in the wilderness by quoting scripture. After the third temptation and citing of scripture, Satan left Him (Matthew 4:1-11). If refuting Satan with scripture worked for Jesus, it can work for us. So when I am fearful of certain situations that are not Godly fears, I quote scriptures. Some of the passages from the New International Version of the Bible include:

“No weapon forged against you will prevail” (Isa 54:17).

“I can do all this through him who gives me strength” (Phil 4:13).

“The one who is in you is greater than the one who is in the world” (1 John 4:4).

“But God demonstrates his love for us in this: While we were still sinners, Christ died for us.” (Rom 5:8).

Now I know what you are thinking: Did any of these fears materialize? None of them materialized as “deal killers” so to speak. As of four years in the field, we have only been temporarily sick due to the food or water. Regarding the fear of being liked, people gravitate towards us, being white, especially since we only want to minister to them without expecting anything in return. In one village, every time we pass by in our car, the children run after us screaming with excitement, “Mama B! Mama B!” This is my wife Beverlie’s nickname in the villages. “Beverlie” is hard for them to say since there is no “r” in the Tonga

language. On occasion, I have even heard them yell out, “Pastor Jack,” or “Pastor Jackie!” Children follow my wife as if she was the Pied Piper. She is a magnet for children because of her teaching ability, effervescent personality, and Christian example.

Finding an interpreter of the native language of Tonga was one of our first challenges in arriving at the small farming town named Choma, which became the capital of the Southern Province after we arrived. We had to be careful in selecting an interpreter because we pay them money for their services and you don’t want someone who is in it for the money instead of for the ministry. So here is what we looked for in an interpreter: 1) A good sense of direction in finding our way in and out of remote areas since Bev and I are weak in this area, even with a GPS. 2) Have a deep walk in the Lord so as to interpret spiritual things correctly. 3) Be able to take the ministry where we leave off after our five-year assignment to that area is finished so the ministry does not die. 4) Have a stable personal life so our time is not consumed with their problems. 5) Be able to live off the part-time translator earnings and supplement it with another part-time job. 6) Have a good personality that attracts others. 7) Have a good command of the English language and their native language. 8) Lastly, and most importantly, we needed to do what God told Samuel in looking for the next king of Israel: Look at the heart, not at the outward appearance (see 1 Samuel 16:7).

In our first church service at the church led by the only pastor contact we had in Choma, the choir director caught Bev’s attention. He seemed to have a good command of English and Tonga, and he led the choir with the authority of a seasoned veteran. God immediately spoke to Bev in His

still, silent voice saying that this man was our interpreter. We met him after the service and discovered that he had no full-time job and would love to be our interpreter. Thankfully his pastor agreed, saying that this would be a great opportunity for him to earn money and draw closer to God. Three years later he so distinguished himself as a great interpreter and minister of the Gospel that we put him through Advance Missions Training to become a full-fledged missionary with Overland Missions. His background of being an orphan, working his way through high school, and achieving missionary status with Overland Missions is a real success story and encouragement to other Zambians. You can hear a pin drop when he gives his testimony to the people as they listen intently.

My next fear of the food was put to rest when I tried nshema and relish – the main staple of the Zambian people. It is ground maize and water with a similar consistency of grits in the United States. Zambians combine it with a leafy relish and chicken. During the AMT training, we learned how to kill and pluck chickens in case one is given to us by a villager (which is a great honor). I can remember our group taking ninety minutes just to kill and pluck it while other groups did it in twenty minutes. The technique is to trap the chicken under a basket pinning its neck to the ground so it can't run around and release the testosterone, which makes the meat tough. One of our fellow students, upon pinning the chicken's neck under the basket, confessed that she was going to have trouble cutting its neck to finally kill it. Another student remarked that she wouldn't have to kill the bird after all because she had just accidentally strangled it with the basket. We all had a good laugh at her mistake.

Security is something I always consider when going



anywhere. In fact, one of the rules of Overland Missions is NEVER ALONE. Some of that philosophy involves safety. White people are targets in Zambia and many other African nations. There is a perception that all whites have money. After returning to America during our third year, our house back in Zambia was robbed. Surprisingly, the thieves only took two sets of sheets and a remote control for the television. Clothes, our television, our microwave, and many other items were left untouched. I am always concerned about crime when there is a bar nearby and men who are intoxicated start hassling you. The real danger, though, occurs when a robbery is well planned and thieves involve insiders like a night guard, which is what had happened in our case.

We took the advice for the Center for Disease Control and got eleven inoculations before traveling to Zambia. The expense for our shots was over \$1,000 in 2012. It was worth it, though, as many diseases can be life threatening. Disease can remove you from the field permanently or sideline you with great expense until you recover. Malaria is the biggest threat to Americans in Zambia. In 2016, two of our missionaries had to be emergency air-lifted to Johannesburg in critical condition because of it. Whenever we feel sick, I always insist on having a malaria blood test as a precaution. It is cheap and well worthwhile to arrest malaria at its earliest stage.

Buying a used car in Africa is like playing the slot machines in Las Vegas if you are not careful. I always encourage our young missionaries not to buy a cheap car costing only a few thousand dollars because it will only last about one or two years. When you buy another you will find most of the money invested for the first one dwindles to almost

nothing. We were in church praying about our number-one ministry tool, our car, just before leaving for Zambia. The minister was speaking with slang in his sermon for affect. All of a sudden Bev heard God say in His still, silent voice, “I don’t give no junk.” She knew He was referring to the car He would provide for us upon entering Zambia. She reminded me of it when we were at the dealerships in Lusaka, Zambia’s capital city, and it gave us confidence to pick the right car at the right price. Surprisingly, the more we talked about how we were going to use it to minister Christianity to people in the bush, the more the Muslim Pakistanis came down on their price eventually to 70% of their asking price. We finalized the paperwork, and our used 2002 Toyota Prado with only about 20,000 miles turned out to be a great car. I say about 20,000 miles because we discovered that the odometer was not working after driving it about 420 miles. We had it fixed, though, and impartial mechanics on our base assured me that it looked like a car with only that amount of mileage and not to return it.

My wife Bev had different fears. She puts a lot of time and energy into making a house a home. Decorations are a large part of this, incorporating the local paintings, furnishings, drapes, etc. So it was no wonder that she panicked when we first entered the rural areas and all we saw were mud huts. I will never forget her first words to me upon seeing them: “What have you gotten me into?” she gasped. We were both relieved though when we saw the Overland Missions base with large tents furnished with queen-sized beds and electricity. The nice main center, where delicious meals were served, was the icing on the cake. In spite of this reprieve, Bev titled our first newsletter “Shock and Awe,” remembering her culture shock as she saw the mud huts. Once she began ministering, especially to the children, this

trepidation disappeared. When you see lives changed by the Gospel, it is very rewarding, and this joy far exceeds the pain of the sacrifices in a third-world country.

The average age of the young adults in our AMT class was about twenty-five years old. Understandably, we wondered if we would be able to relate to them and visa-versa. We were relieved when we all meshed very well, forming a ministry synergy under God's grace. There were a few minor misunderstandings, which is understandable, as tiredness eventually hampered all of us. For the students like us who remained with Overland Missions – 10 out of our class of 14 – we have become good friends, thereby bridging the age divide.

Another worry we shared was for our children. Our sons, ages 24, 26, and 30 when we joined Overland Missions, have always been close to us. In spite of being out of the nest, I was concerned how they would function while we were in Africa. Would they drift from God now that Bev and I were not there to occasionally take their spiritual temperature?

We took all of our medications with us, including some that were just precautionary. We are blessed to have one of the finest doctors in Zambia right down the street from us. His clinic can't handle anything major, though, and neither can the hospitals in the smaller towns in Zambia. Even the capital city Lusaka is not equipped for major problems like heart attacks requiring stents. For major illnesses or accidents, it is recommended to medivac to Johannesburg. Therefore international insurance that includes medivac is essential. Otherwise, the bill would be astounding. A doctor was on our base during our AMT training and I asked him

how his assessment of the quality control was going at the nearest hospital. He responded that we would not want to spend much time there and indicated that it was not a very good facility compared to hospitals in the United States. The best advice I received was to attack medical problems immediately, especially the possibility of malaria. Delayed treatment can result in disastrous consequences.

Witchcraft is another concern in the mission field. In Zambia, it seems that the farther you get into the remote areas, the more you encounter witchcraft. Charms, or strings, dedicated to the witchdoctor are often found in houses or on people supposedly for protection or healing. Witchdoctors charge money for these services, but sadly, they only end up making the condition worse. We assure the people we minister to that the power for healing comes through Jesus. The Bible confers this in Mark 16 where it says, "In Jesus' name you will lay hands on the sick and they will recover." At first it frightened me to see people possessed by evil spirits manifested by rolling on the ground. After I realized that as Christians we have authority over the demon spirits to cast them out in Jesus' name (again in Mark 16), the fear was replaced by confidence in the Lord. Prayers to deliver people from demon spirits can last for hours or minutes before the person is released. When that happens it is a wonderful site to see the peace of Christ take over the person.

Lord, where will we find a place to live in Choma? I wondered during our second fact-finding trip. We have a referral to one pastor, but he is not in real estate. My sister told us about a lodge that could be a temporary solution, so I contacted the owner who told me about a small duplex he had for rent. Upon seeing it, I realized that it was a gem, and

I was ready to sign the lease immediately. My cool-headed wife, though, convinced me to pray about it overnight and make the decision the next day. God then spoke to her in His still, silent voice the next morning in a church prayer group, confirming that the duplex was more than enough. The price was half of what people told me to expect, and it included utilities, cable television, maid service, a gardener, and a security guard at night. The owner was a Christian, which made it all the better because we knew he would be trustworthy.

It took about a year to raise the funds for our yearly support. In spite of being in sales my whole career, I found it uncomfortable to ask for support from people. I had my mentor review my results of number of calls, number of appointments, and support raised on a weekly basis. He would verbally chastise me when I did not reach my goals for the week – so much so that his wife told him that he was about to lose me as a friend if he was not more compassionate. I appreciated him, though, and his hard-nosed expectations motivated me to be persistent and to persevere. People told me that when you achieve your support goal, you graduate to the next level of faith in God. They were right, as it increased my faith in God dramatically.

Once fully funded, my next fear surfaced. People in the United States were heralding Bev and me as heroes for being missionaries. I do not like the lime light and despise it when people herald us as a larger-than-life missionaries. I want my life to be an encouragement to others while exemplifying humility in the process. The Bible is full of stories where God has stripped opportunities and titles from leaders who had become full of pride and conceit.

My resolve is that neither Bev nor I will fall into that trap of the Devil. There is a fine line between humility and boldness, though. We need to be bold to get the message of the Gospel to the people but display humility in our ministries and lives. Accordingly, Colossians 3:12 says it best: “Clothe yourselves with compassion, kindness, humility, gentleness, and patience.”

## Finances and Raising Support

I once heard that peoples' biggest fear is cancer, and it's followed closely by public speaking. I would like to propose a third one: raising support. When it is mentioned, you can see a glaze come over peoples' eyes and picture their hair standing up on the back of their neck. I was in sales all my life, which should have enabled me to transition into raising support with very little anxiety. The problem, though, is that you do not want to offend people, and there are so many people raising support these days that it can make you feel like a used car salesman. This chapter is dedicated to those people who are considering becoming missionaries. It will give a brief glimpse of the challenges of support-raising.

In reading the Bible I noticed that Jesus, His disciples, and the apostle Paul all raised support. Why then should we be intimidated by this process? Paul related his philosophy on giving in Philippians 4:16-17: "Even when I was in Thessalonica, you sent me aid more than once when I was in need. Not that I desire your gifts; what I desire is that more be credited to your account." Here Paul not only is praising the Philippians for their giving to his ministry, but he also is reinforcing that they will be blessed by God ("credited to their account") for their faithfulness in doing so. I believe that supporters of missionaries will also be blessed today for their prayerful and financial support to accomplish evangelism on the mission field. This is one of the principles I am sure that God holds dear. We are so

thankful for the prayerful and financial support from our people and churches. We pray for them and are confident that God is honoring their faithfulness.

Selling commercial real estate for six years and software to hospitals for over fifteen years trained me extensively on how to get appointments. In fact, it seems like I was always the one who companies turned to when prospecting an untapped territory. In January each year, Overland Missions takes two days, in house, to further train its new missionaries who have completed its Advanced Missions Training in Zambia, Africa. I teach the section on how to get appointments for fund raising. I empathize with our people about the challenge but not so much where I let them off the hook of responsibility to set up the appointments.

The first step before raising support is to set up a budget. We projected all of our expenses related to going to the mission field and our expenses at home when on leave. That way we knew how much we needed to raise to be fully funded. How did we as new prospective missionaries know how much to budget in each category? We didn't, so we asked seasoned veterans for advice.

Some of the budget categories can include subtopics like savings for emergencies and retirement, automobile expenses like gasoline (or petrol, as it is called in foreign countries). In Zambia, it is very expensive at over \$7 per gallon. This is one projection that I drastically underestimated at first. Other expense categories include clothing, debt financing, household, medical, insurances, food, memberships, entertainment, travel, miscellaneous, food, etc. I like to project each of these on a monthly basis and then have a line item recording what I actually spent.



Then I can compare the budget with the actual to know where I stand.

I know the temptation is to intentionally underestimate your expenses to get to the field quicker. The thought is that once your potential supporter sees you on the mission field, it will motivate him or her to support you. At Overland Missions, we are required to be fully funded before going into the mission field. It would be a nightmare to be short of money once there and have to miss meals to save money. There is enough pressure on the mission field without adding the stress of money to the quotient. So, to those considering full time missions, do yourself and your spouse a favor by being fully funded before traveling to the mission field.

I seem to have a gift in getting appointments, but I wish I could say that I had a gift in converting 90% of them to support. Regardless, the most important ingredient contributing to your success in raising support is getting appointments. Your first step is to set your goals for setting appointments. A formula such as the example below will help you set these goals.

1. Consider a budget of \$40,000. If your average yearly support is \$400 per appointment, your net number of appointments needed is 100.
2. 100 net appointments divided by let's say a 33% success ratio equals 300 total gross appointments needed.
3. 300 total gross appointments divided by 28 weeks to get funded = 10 appointments needed per week.
4. 10 appointments per week divided by a 20% call success ratio = 50 calls to make weekly, or about 7

calls each day for 7 days or 10 calls each day for 5 days.

How long will it take to set up 10 appointments? If you figure 5 minutes per call times 50 calls, it will take about 4 hours if you do not know the people well. It will be quicker if you know them well, of course. So schedule a weekday morning between 9 and 11 a.m. to call the person at work, or call them on Saturday morning from 10 to 12 p.m. or Sunday evening from 4:30 to 8 p.m. These are the times when you will be most likely to reach your prospect.

The biggest reason people fail to try to get appointments is fear. Build confidence and reduce fear by picking the ripe apples first after rehearsing the call. Ask yourself what is the worst thing that could happen. A “no” is not a catastrophe.

Start by naming three general categories of prospects where you can get supporters. Next, arrange your priority of calls – this is your first step in getting started. Make a list of all the contacts you have and separate them into A, B, or C priority.

A = Top prospects to give you the highest funding in the quickest time frame, plus the sure-thing prospects, such as good friends or relatives.

B = Medium priority prospects – funding somewhere between A and C priority.

C = Low priority prospects – lowest return and most work to get it.

Then separate each contact in each alphabetical priority

into a number priority. An example would look like this:

Prospect A1 - A close relative or friend – a sure supporter for respectable amount.

Prospect A2 - A close relative or friend – very high probability of support.

Prospect A3 - A Bible study friend, etc.

Start with the A's and lowest number first (pick the ripe apples first).

The first step before making calls is to pray. Be open and honest with God about your fears and your inexperience in phone calling. Ask for the help of the Holy Spirit to give you peace and the right words to say and to soften the heart of your potential supporter. Have an occasional reward to motivate you for successes in number of calls made. Find a person for weekly accountability regarding successes/failures. So when can you skip calls? You can ask for an appointment when you see the person at church, at a Bible study, etc. Remember to email, Facebook, or text only those who prefer communicating that way. If that doesn't work, the phone call is your next option. I typically prefer phone calls.

How can you get past a receptionist or the gatekeeper? Start by making him/her your friend – Google a current event in their area for conversation. Otherwise you are just like the other hundreds of people trying to get past that person. Be accommodating yet assertive.

Once in front of your potential supporter, do not forget to

ask, “Will you help me?” Referrals are key to your success. People love to help others. If they cannot support you financially, ask if they would support you prayerfully. As well as being a blessing to your missions work, this gives them an out and takes the edge off of the situation, enabling you to keep them as a friend and prayer partner.

The easiest way to justify not making the calls is to make an excuse. In the Bible, Caleb and Joshua spied out Canaan, the Promised Land God had given the Israelites. They reported that the land was fertile and that they could conquer the present inhabitants. Conversely, the other ten spies reported that the people were large and made them feel like grasshoppers. As a result, Joshua and Caleb entered the Promised Land and received a great inheritance while the other ten were not permitted to enter (see Numbers Chapters 13 and 14). The mission field is your Promised Land. Don’t fail to go forward because of excuses or you will miss a tremendous opportunity.

Here are some myths I discovered about raising support:

1. The people with the most money will be your strongest supporters financially (not necessarily).
2. It is all up to me (no, it is up to God and you).
3. The hardest money to raise is the first part (no, it is the last part).
4. I will get four or five big supporters and be finished with support raising in just a few months (that would be very rare, this is a slow process).
5. My prospect will call me back (don’t count on that, take the lead and keep calling).
6. Surely my family members and best friends will support me (not necessarily, they may have other more pressing financial commitments).

7. A “no” answer for support is a reflection on me (no it is not, this might be just bad timing).
8. The best thing that a prospect could agree to do is to support me financially (no, it is to pray for you).
9. There is no need to worry about analysis paralysis in support raising (yes there is, because it is way too easy to push papers around your desk instead of making calls).
10. I can just call churches I don’t know to raise support and save time (my experience is that it is difficult to get the support of churches).
11. I haven’t talked to that person for ten years so they are not a support prospect (yes they are, some of our best supporters were not current contacts).
12. People just out of college are poor financially and are thus bad prospects (not true, they have just landed a job and have lower expenses than later in life).

Make up a script that you can read comfortably on the phone. The Devil’s main tool is frustration. Don’t let him win with it. Keep trying! In fact, here are some verses to counteract discouragement:

1. “No weapon forged against you will prevail” (Isaiah 54:17).
2. “No, in all these things we are more than conquerors through him who loved us.” (Romans 8:37).
3. “I can do all this through him who gives me strength.” (Phil 4:13).
4. “The one who is in you is greater than the one who is in the world” (1 John 4:4).
5. “Ask and it will be given to you, seek and you will find; knock and the door will be opened to you.”

(Mat. 7:7).

6. “Whatever you ask for in prayer, believe that you have received it, and it will be yours.”

Mark 11:24).

In closing, I believe if Jesus was here now, He would ask each of us what John the Baptist asked his followers to ask Jesus, “Are you the one who is to come [to the mission field in our case], or should we expect someone else?” (See Matthew 11:3). That is my question to the prospective missionary today. If you truly are the one Jesus has selected to go to the mission field, you will make those painful calls and appointments to raise your support in a timely manner. God needs to know if He can trust you before releasing you to the mission field, and this is a test from God to gage your motivation to become a missionary. Once you are fully funded, always remember to be led by God.

## Assessing an Area

In choosing where to reside and minister, it was important for us to review many of the points I will discuss in this chapter. Doing so showed us the challenges and the blessings that we would encounter. Just like when the Israelites explored Canaan, we explored the land, people, food, ministry opportunities, etc. (see Numbers, Chapter 13). Joshua and Caleb saw the large inhabitants of Canaan and knew that they would have to conquer them to possess the land God had given them. It was described as a land flowing with milk and honey. Conversely, the other ten spies who also went with them on the excursion reported that they seemed as small as grasshoppers compared to these foreigners and their cities were well fortified. They even spread fear among the Israelites upon returning to their base. For that disobedience God struck the other ten spies – but not Joshua and Caleb – with a plague and they died before going into Canaan.

The other people who rebelled against Joshua and Caleb were also not permitted to enter. The point here is that all of spies saw the same circumstances. Joshua and Caleb followed God wholeheartedly, though, in spite of the challenges apparent to everyone, and God rewarded their obedience with victory. They knew God would help them conquer their enemies. So the most important thing that we realized was that regardless of how difficult an area seemed, if God was saying to go forward, we would obey and proceed in faith just like Joshua and Caleb did in

leading the Israelites into the promise land.

In 2012, Bev and I traveled to a small farming community called Choma, about three hours from Overland Missions base. If we moved there, we would be the one of the first missionaries from Overland Missions who lived off of our base near Livingstone in a distant area. We were therefore very cautious before making the move. Here are the things we investigated:

1. How close to our house is the ministry area to which we were assigned?
2. What are the costs of food, housing, gasoline, furniture, kitchen supplies, and other expenses?
3. What food is available in the grocery store?
4. How close to our house are medical facilities and what medical conditions can they handle?
5. What are the needs for ministry in our area?
6. Is the area secure from crime?
7. Is there a guard assigned to our house at night?
8. What churches are in the area and what ministries do they have?
9. Where is there a reputable place to buy a car and get a car mechanic?
10. Where can we make photocopies?
11. Is there a bank there? What are the ATM charges for withdrawing money?
12. Is the house furnished with electricity, a stove, a refrigerator, a TV, hot water, drinkable water, a queen-sized bed, closets or armoires, curtains, a tub of water for when water is rationed, a spare bedroom with beds, air conditioning, fans, storage under beds, linens, a shower curtain, kitchen utensils, plates, pots, pans, a pantry, etc.?
13. What is the strategy for lighting, toilet flushing, water,



etc. when the electricity goes out for a considerable length of time?

14. How will you get support wired to your bank account in the U.S., and does your bank connect with the bank's ATM in Zambia?

15. Is a ministerial degree needed in ministering to the pastors in the area?

16. Can we handle the five-year commitment that Overland Missions suggests for the area?

17. Where are the outlets for occasional fellowship with people of our own culture?

18. How do we get cell phone service?

19. What is God saying to do?

In 2016, our five-year commitment to Zambia's Siachitema Chiefdom was two years from completion, so we began seeking God for our next assignment. We felt led by God to go to Papua New Guinea's Buka/Bougainville Islands. Our president had been there for a crusade years earlier and felt touched by their need for missionaries. In order to assess the area, we decided to visit even though it would take four days to get there by plane, including three overnights. It took considerable money, but it was worth it in order to make the final decision about the relocation. You would not take a job relocation without visiting the new city first so why should I take a missionary relocation without seeing it first?

Upon arriving at Buka, the jet lag and time change had consumed our energy. So we took a day to catch up on our sleep. We began investigating housing options, food expenses, churches, cars, medical clinics or hospitals, security, laundry, fuel costs, and immigration, and we talked to the spiritually prominent people there. We next

moved from Buka to Bougainville to assess that area. These are adjacent islands that were plagued by revolution in defending their land from those seeking the gold reserves on Bougainville. Years earlier over 20,000 people were killed in the conflict. Many scars remain to this day. We stayed in inexpensive lodges in each location. Buka discounted the room significantly since we were missionaries.

After meeting quite a few prominent pastors and assessing both locations, we determined that the area was not a good fit for us. It rained every day and we knew the humidity combined with the temperatures that exceeded 100 degrees Fahrenheit would be unbearable for us. In addition, people partied all night long four or five nights of the week in the streets, and that would keep us awake all night. Many people chewed beetlenut, which is a combination of nuts, lime from rocks, and mustard. It gave them a high and turned their teeth bright orange. Beetlenut juice spit lined all of the footpaths. It got to the point that I asked the boat and car taxi drivers to smile before selecting them. If their teeth were orange I knew they were eating the beetlenut and would pass on their services.

Buka/Bougainville need missionaries just like Africa, but it would not be us. Like our area in Africa, the local pastors had become complacent, and evangelism was sporadic. They needed a spiritual shot in the arm that missionaries could give. We recommended to our president that a couple in their 20s, who were strong in street ministry, would be a good fit. They would be less apt to need the area hospital, which had about three hundred people waiting to see one doctor when we visited. They could tolerate the excessive temperatures and require less sleep than we would.

I asked God the reason for the expensive trip to Buka/Bougainville. The apostle Paul rearranged his plans because Timothy was going to Macedonia. So we could change ours if Buka/Bougainville was not a fit, which it wasn't. A good Zambian pastor counseled me afterwards amidst my confusion. He said that when God directs you to pursue a ministry, He gives you a peace about it and a release from your present ministry. I had neither a peace about Buka or Bougainville, nor did I feel a release from our ministry in Zambia. Being human, we thought that we had just missed God's direction completely. Conversely, though, I thought I kept hearing God say that this was to pave the way for a future crusade.

Then in 2017, a visiting evangelist on the Overland Missions base prayed for me and prophesied over me saying Papua New Guinea. Afterwards, when I questioned him further on it, I discovered that he and his team were going to Buka/Bougainville in 2018 for a major crusade or crusades. God began putting the puzzle pieces together, and I was right in the middle of it. This group had once given a crusade in Port Moresby, Papua New Guinea, and 30,000 people attended. The result was that many committed their lives to Christ. This was a welcome change for a place known to be one of the highest crime areas in the world. Buka/Bougainville was a different story, though, and my two-week experience there would be invaluable in the planning process. At the time this book was written, I began seeking God about the crusade. God's plan was different though so the crusade was cancelled. Instead, God has opened the door to launch us into Blantyre, Malawi - a new season of ministry.

## “Spread the Net Wide”

1 Chronicles 4:10 talks about the prayer of Jabez: “Oh that You would bless me and enlarge my territory! Let Your hand be with me, and keep me from harm so that I will be free from pain. And God granted his request.” Like Jabez, this was our prayer to which God seemed to say spread the ministry net wide to influence as many people as possible for Him. The apostle Paul was also instrumental in our decision to “Spread the Net Wide” as he said that he wanted to become all things to all people that he might save some from unbelief in Christ. (See 1 Corinthians 9:22)

Prayer is an important part of my mornings. A prominent chief once stayed with us. He got up at 4 a.m. each morning to pray and read his Bible for three hours before starting the day. He also fasted breakfast and lunch three days a week. When I saw this practice, it changed my life. I saw the success that he had and how God opened doors for him because of his faithfulness – even at the highest level, including the door to the president of Zambia. I began getting up at 5 a.m. (sorry, but 4 a.m. and I are not a match...nor is fasting for three days a week) and was amazed how quickly two hours passed. I use the guide of ACTS for prayer. A = Adoration of God; C = Confessing my sins, doubts, fears, etc.; T = Thanksgiving for all God does for us; and S = Supplication, where I ask Him for our and others’ needs. In addition, I read my Bible and meditate on certain scriptures.

The ministry potential in Zambia is overwhelming. There are so many needs that the question is where to start. The important thing that we realized right from the start was that this is God's ministry, not ours. If we were faithful, God would accomplish His objectives for the chiefdom and city to which we were assigned. So it was a matter of planning, using God's guidance in prayer, and reading the Bible. Psalms 16:3 says, "Commit to the Lord whatever you do, and he will establish your plans." Where does He want us to minister this year, this week, this day?

Someone once told me that about 60% of God's guidance comes to us by reading the Bible. I have found that to be true. Two scriptures stood out almost immediately in our minds. Proverbs 11:30 (NASB) says, "The fruit of the righteous is a tree of life, And he who is wise wins souls." We felt this was directing us to be evangelical in our approach to get as many Zambians to commit their lives to Christ as possible, and direct them to Bible-believing churches for the follow up. Thus was the direction from God to "spread the net wide," to reach as many people as possible.

Secondly, we felt that God was directing us via Romans 15:20, in which the apostle Paul said that his ambition was to preach where people did not know Christ and not to build on another person's spiritual foundation. This was confirmation that the Overland Missions philosophy was for us, namely: To minister in remote areas where people did not know Jesus as their Lord and savior, and to go where the other missionaries would not because of inconvenience. We knew that God loved those people as much as He did the ones in the cities. Surprisingly, I have heard that only about 2.7% of the missionaries in Zambia venture off the tar roads and onto bumpy dirt roads to reach the remote

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villages. Conversely, the major cities are crowded with missionaries and nongovernment organizations (NGOs) wanting to help. That is why Overland Missions targets the unreached people groups in remote areas.

Our first goal was to meet and develop a relationship with the chief of our chiefdom and as many of the pastors from all denominations and village headmen as possible. Combined, this group can completely change a chiefdom for the good. Chiefs in Zambia are called traditional leaders because they preside over their chiefdoms in solving issues and interpreting laws. Our chief accepted Christ into his life the second week we were there and told us to spread the Gospel throughout the chiefdom, knowing that it would finally bring peace. That directive opened many doors for us, as people knew that with the chief’s referral, they could trust us. In closing, he shook hands with Bev and said through our interpreter that his skin is black and ours is white, but we are all children of God. I felt tears come to my eyes at that point as I realized that God had opened a huge door for us. It was now our responsibility to walk through it. So every year we meet with the chief at least twice, giving him our progress report for the chiefdom and praying for him as the leader.

Bev and I spent about two weeks meeting headmen of the villages. A pastor rode with us to direct us. After about a day, I had to direct him to not take us on any more short cuts. We were driving through cornfields to save a few minutes while risking flat tires from cut corn stalks six inches high. Changing flat tires in the bush is hard since the dirt roads are not flat.

One meeting comes to mind that helped usher us into the

chiefdom. We visited the superior headman of the whole chiefdom and asked him at the end of the meeting if he needed prayer for anything. He responded yes, that he had a bad back and it was hurting even at that time. We prayed for him and he walked us to the car. At the car he lit up in excitement saying that his back had just been healed and was not hurting anymore. Miracles make a huge impact on people for Christ.

It was also important that we meet the pastor or the spiritual leader of the large denominations in the chiefdom to develop a relationship. When we attended one of their churches, I was asked to do the shaky-shaky. This is a dance to their music in front of the whole church wearing a woman's wrap like a skirt over your clothes. I was a bit embarrassed because I am a terrible dancer, and secondly, I was not used to this freedom, bordering on disrespect in our United States. But everyone laughed and it endeared me to the pastor and the congregation. The capstone came when I sat down on the front bench afterwards, and everyone heard a loud crack! as the bench broke. The humor of the moment served to deepen our bond. The point is that pastors and church members can open the doors to other pastors and even orchestrate future pastors' conferences for me to be the keynote speaker with numerous denominations invited. In four years I have had five of these conferences averaging about forty-five pastors in attendance, one even representing eight different denominations of attendees. Topics included "How to Increase God's Anointing on Your Ministry," "How to Increase Your Income as a Pastor," "Successful Small Businesses You as a Pastor Can Have on the Side," "Godly Wisdom in Leadership According to the Book of Proverbs," and more. For the last conference, I invited an expert from a local nongovernment organization to share

his wisdom on the topic. I pay for the breakfast and the lunch as an added incentive for them to attend and am sure some attend just for the food. Regardless of their motivation to come, I know that they learn something and are encouraged.

Each of the last three years, I sponsored an evangelical luncheon for the Southern Provincial government department leaders. Choma, the small town in which we live, became the capital of the Southern Province shortly after we moved there. So it was natural that our ministry net should include them. I stress to them that I have no political agenda but rather would just like to share biblical truths on leadership. Government leaders need to hear the word of God just like everyone else, and I told them that their decisions should be based on the truths that the Bible relates.

I usually invite one or two chiefs and the president of Overland Missions to hear and participate on the biblical leadership topics. For example, one of the topics was “What the Book of Proverbs Says about Godly Wisdom on Your Jobs.” Wisdom is the most popular prayer request among leaders, so it had a good attendance. I pay for the lunch as most departments are on tight budgets.

My wife taught school in the United States for over twenty years. So it was wise for our ministries to include discipling school children. We felt God strongly leading us to this ministry largely because children are treated as second-class citizens in Zambia. Jesus always included children in his ministry to highlight their importance. Matthew 19:14 relates that the disciples were trying to keep the children away from Jesus so as not to waste His time. He responded



not to prevent them; after all, the Kingdom of Heaven is made up of those like them (those with child-like faith). These children are the future leaders of their villages, their cities, their provinces, and possibly even their country.

We chose seventh, eighth, and ninth graders since they will soon experience a tremendous transition in tenth grade. At that level they either typically move to the city for tenth grade or they drop out of school if their grades are not good enough or if they do not have the school funds. Public and private schools are happy to have us for the Club Day, which lasts for one hour after school ends. I sometimes dropped off my wife and an interpreter at one school, and then I went to the next school with an interpreter. That way we covered twice the territory, which enabled us to minister to ten schools after four years.

One of the very effective programs was called “Days for Girls.” In these sessions, we distributed menstrual cycle pads and underwear developed by a local trade school in Choma. We gave them to girls who were the best students or most improved students as incentives to keep them from skipping school once a month during their menstrual cycles. Each pad is washable and lasts for three years. Surprisingly, many of the male school principals did not realize why the girls were missing a week out of each month due to this. Menstruation caused them to fall behind in their schoolwork and I am sure has even been the culprit for some dropping out of school.

We used the pamphlet of the Gospel of John, sold by the Pocket Testament League, as our tool in helping to teach English and the bible. Two people would share a book, practicing reading English out loud and memorizing key

scriptures. We would also give scriptures as handouts for them to take home and help evangelize their families. The schoolteachers loved this technique as it was helping them teach English, and some told us that their children were much better behaved and more attentive in class as a result of our Light Union Club.

One principal asked us to share with the whole school about sexual purity in order to slow or even eliminate the growth of AIDS and unwanted pregnancies common among older adolescents in Zambia. He said not to soft-peddle it even though the audience included third through ninth graders. We tactfully presented lessons on the immorality that can result in AIDS, and we discussed the expenses and lost career dreams involved in unwanted pregnancies. One principal who interpreted for me expanded my lesson into sex education. In his mixture of Tonga and English, my face turned red as he did not soft-coat the lesson. Before we knew it, other schools began to ask us to teach sexual purity. One senior high-school principal, one year after our talk, said that pregnancies in his school were way down, and he partially attributed it to our lessons.

In the school ministry, one misnomer we had was that the eighth or ninth graders typically did not have many prayer needs. Surprisingly, they did, and we started factoring in the last 20 minutes to pray individually for their needs. Prayer requests included nightmares of a spirit choking them, heart problems, eye problems, leg injuries from soccer, stomach aches, headaches, wisdom for school, etc. Again, miracles of healing make a large impact on us, on the person healed, and on that person's schoolmates.

One girl came forward asking healing for poor eyesight,

and after my wife prayed for her, she was excited to be able to read the small-print poster on the back wall fifteen feet away. In addition to messages of God's power to heal us, we preach other topics each week to uplift the children and keep them on the right spiritual track. One such message is not to compare oneself to others (see Galatians 6:4). Comparisons will either give children an ego problem if they are better than others at something, or it will hurt their self-esteem if they are worse at something. We stress then that our identity as believers in Christ is in Him, not in our grades, our ability to play soccer (the national game), our job, or anything other than Him.

In addition to being an excellent teacher, my wife also plays the harp and has her small twenty-one string harp in Zambia to help open doors. In 2016, before the Zambian presidential election, she was asked to play for the president of Zambia twice. Unfortunately, he had to cancel his trip to Choma both times because of other more pressing commitments. She plays in the Choma Hospital each year as I pray for all of the patients. In 2017, for instance, she played in all of the wings of the hospital as I prayed for 206 patients. The head nurse and the administrator assured me that people with infectious diseases are isolated and are not placed in with the general patients. In one case I asked a girl why she was there. She responded that something was wrong with her ears and she could not hear well. I prayed for her to be healed in Jesus name, and immediately she grabbed her clothes and walked out of the hospital healed. A nurse told Bev one year that she had a terrible headache, and that the soothing harp music completely relieved it. This is a winning combination – peaceful harp music soothing the physically downtrodden combined with the power of prayer.

Ministry to our missionaries uses synergism to increase all of our effectiveness. Our home in Choma is three hours from the base of Overland Missions and is on the way to Lusaka, Zambia’s capital city. Our house has become a mini base for lunches, overnights, and babysitting while parents go to the doctor down the street. I also direct our missionaries to the merchants in town who do good work at a fair price. This saves much time and money. As a result, we share in their successes and help overcome setbacks. If we were alone, our overall results would not be as profitable nor would those who need our help.

The white farmers are hard to influence for Christ. They typically are wealthy in comparison to most Zambians and have not been raised as Christians. We try to help them all we can and have even ministered to their workforce to try to change behaviors like adultery or wife beating. Additionally, I play tennis with them occasionally, which helps strike a good rapport in spite of my inconsistent play. Good relationships open doors for ministry. We do attend a church quite often that ministers to the white farmers. Its growth has been slow, though, because of the spiritual walls surrounding their neighbors. We put our main interpreter on this farm to minister to their workforce, and he was very successful in doing so through prayer and counseling. In 2015, during a draught year, I am confident that his prayers were responsible for that farm receiving so much rain that it spilled over the dam. Surrounding farms barely received a drop of rain.

Children’s crusades are always fun and produce tremendous fruit. We hold at least three each year. We make sure to include the large village we always pass to get to schools or other villages in the bush. We don’t advertise it beforehand

but we just walk through the village announcing on a bullhorn the crusade on the soccer field starting in 30 minutes. Immediately children start flocking to that area eager to have some fun and learn about Jesus. Four-year-old girls will show up with the handicap of carrying two year olds on their backs. We have had to limit their participation in games for safety sake. At the end, typically more than a hundred children raise their hands to commit their lives to Christ. These crusades are also a main focus of expeditions, churches which come to Zambia led by Overland Missions. They have games, biblical stories, and music, which takes enthusiasm to the next level.

One of the divisions of Overland Missions is called Sustain. It is responsible for helping the villagers sustain themselves economically, largely through programs like “Farming God’s Way”. It encourages the use of natural resources like manure and field grass to economically enhance the farming process. Biblical truths are taught in conjunction with farming techniques to give the audience a complete education. Village attendees usually range from 20 to 50 participants when we sponsor a program in our chiefdom.

In 2016, I became a chaplain for the professional soccer team in Choma called the Green Eagles. With this role, another pastor and I will go in the night before each home game to give the team a combined inspirational/evangelical message. My wife sometimes attends meetings and helps pray for the players. They think of her as the team mother. Each meeting starts with songs, then progresses to the message, and ends with prayer for individual needs. I was surprised to see the players go down on their knees to pray before the first and second half of each game and after scoring goals. I did not tell them to do it, so it was very

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meaningful to me – as was the time the head chaplain gave me one of their special Bibles.

Undoubtedly, the tool that spreads the Gospel the quickest in a way that the young and old understand is The Jesus Film, developed in the Tonga language by Campus Crusade for Christ. I use the battery of the car linked to an inverter that converts 12 volts to 110-power to run lights, the projector, and to amplify sound to the speakers. After a short while, people in surrounding villages hear the sound of the film and scurry not to miss it.

It always breaks my heart to see the children shivering throughout the film during winter months in short sleeved t-shirts because they can't afford jackets. On one such cold night, Bev was sitting in a chair in the audience. She felt the little hand of a small girl, who she did not know, softly grab her hand as she snuggled up for warmth. It touched Bev's heart and as she looked up at the magnificent stars of the Southern Hemisphere. Bev thanked God for the fullness of life that Jesus affords us and specifically for that precious moment with the little girl and the opportunity to influence so many lives for Jesus. Because of the cold, I have shortened the film a few times in the winter, but the people became frustrated. They want to see the whole movie. So I show the whole movie now all the time. At the end we ask how many people would like to accept Jesus as Lord of their lives, and typically about 80% of the crowd raises their hands. Afterwards, we pray for the individual needs of the people, and many miracle healings occur. Crowds typically range from 150 to 650 people, with the average being 300. I thank God for tools such as this.

Revivals are starting to become very popular among

village churches. They use them to solidify their members spiritually and attract those who do not attend church. We are invited often to preach a few nights, mornings, or afternoons, and to cap it off with a showing of The Jesus Film. These are very effective and lives are changed for Christ as a result. Most of these are at least an hour-and-a-half from our home and involve multiple days, so it requires us to camp out near the church location.

In 2017, we opened the door to speak at young adult conferences. Bev and I, along with Caristo, our interpreter and Sector Missionary, are a winning combination in addressing topics like “God’s Plan for Your Life” or “Finding Your Wife or Husband.” These two topics are a constant struggle for young adults in Zambia, and they are very appreciative that we address them in our conferences. The summary of our message on marriage, for instance, is that God has a special person picked out for you when you are a Christian. If you have not met your mate yet, you or that person is not ready for marriage and God’s journey of preparation for either or both of you is not complete. The Bible says in 2 Corinthians 6:14 not to be yoked (married) to unbelievers. This means that if you are a Christian, do not marry a person who is not a Christian, otherwise you will be in many disagreements about priorities in life.

Overland Missions leads many expeditions in foreign countries for Americans who would like to experience ministry on the mission field. Bev and I have hosted four of them in our Siachitema Chiefdom. People are usually with us for about ten days and engage in plenty of ministry each day. Many people feel led by God to join Overland Missions as a result. An example of ministries or activities includes: breakfast and clean up, devotions, hut-to-hut

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ministry, lunch and clean up, hut-to-hut afternoon ministry, a children’s crusade at a nearby school, dinner and clean up, and a bonfire or The Jesus Film at night. At the end of the day everyone is tired and crawls into their sleeping bags in an Overland Missions tent. After the expedition, they return home elated from seeing miracles firsthand and from being touched so often by the Holy Spirit. This results in their making significant impacts in their home churches. As we influence more and more churches, pastors and church members know that they can trust us to preach the correct word of God and make a positive influence for Christ. As a result, we receive many invitations to preach and teach Sunday school in churches. I often ask the pastor what he would like me to preach in order to affect his church members the most. “Commitment” is the most requested topic but others include “Fear,” “Jesus Is the Vine, We Are the Branches,” “The Effect of the Word (Gospel) or Words,” “The Blood of Jesus,” and “Following Jesus.”

When we have some extra time in villages before the next program, we often do hut-to-hut ministry. We make sure to make the connection with the people whose property we are entering by first talking about one of their interests, thereby establishing a rapport with them. Topics include their children, the crops they raise, the weather, etc. This breaks the ice and opens the door for our next step – to introduce ourselves and Overland Missions. We tell them what we are there for and describe our ministry. At the end we offer to pray for any needs they might have, including physical, emotional, or relational ones. This is where we see God healing many infirmities, especially in the deep, remote areas.

One thing that we are starting to include in our ministry



in the villages is ministry to men and women in the bars. Deep down, they realize that they have a void in their lives that beer is not filling, and many times the Word of God that we share with them burns in their hearts.

1 Peter 4:10 says, “Each of you should use whatever gift you have received to serve others.” This means that to the extent we rely on these gifts of the Holy Spirit, there will be a correlation as to how much He enables us to operate in them. In summary, Bev and I asked God about the gifts He has given us, and whether we are serving others with those gifts, either at home or on the mission field. Four of the gifts that my wife agrees God has given me are prophesy, administration, public speaking, and favor with prominent people.

Public speaking used to terrify me when I did not have notes to read. Our interpreter once told me, though, that God would honor it if I prepared my lesson in my mind and then trusted the Holy Spirit for help in the delivery without reading notes. This resulted in an added dimension of anointing on my speaking.

My second gift of God is favor with prominent people. A pastor once mentioned that God had given me special favor with the provincial government leaders in Zambia. I kiddingly deflected it by saying that sponsoring the cost of the lunch gives me the favor. He responded that many men with money have approached them in the past and have not gotten the favor that God has given me with them.

Thirdly, my gift of prophesy is a spiritual gift that God uses to encourage others through Bev and me. The Bible says that prophesy is a sign to believers (for encouragement).

It can turn someone’s life completely around when they receive it. (See 1 Corinthians 14:24-25)

Lastly, administration is one of my gifts. Organizing for moving to Africa is a logistical nightmare. There are so many things to consider. In addition, just camping in the remote areas is challenging. I finally developed a list of about 40 things to make sure I included. On a funny side-note, I developed a competition with our assistant and interpreter Caristo. For every time one of us forgot something, it was a mark against him. At five marks against you, it is a loss, and the game starts over. In 2017, he lost one game and I lost two (but they were close in score). It gave humor to our forgetfulness and made us double check to make sure we had everything before proceeding in a ministry. The loss of the competition added insult – and humor – to the injury of having to go without something needed for the ministry. Now that I have confessed my forgetfulness, you are probably wondering how Jack considers himself a good organizer when he forgets things so often. That’s a good point. Maybe, I am not so well organized after all.

## Frustration verses Fulfillment

Frustrations begin each year even before we travel to Zambia. I try to get all of our medical checkups early in the year before leaving so that if anything needs attention, we have the rest of the year to meet the hefty deductible for insurance. Without exception, this leads to last-minute stress in getting everything finished. During the first quarter in 2017, my accountant left his practice, which caused us stress in finding his new company. Then Bev's cataract surgery was scheduled and had complications afterwards. At the same time I was informed that the battery in my car in Zambia had leaked, and acid had run all over the car's hoses, which then needed to be replaced. And we always have trouble getting the 180 days of medications on a "vacation over-ride" from our medical insurance company, and 2017 was no exception. Lastly, doctors detected skin cancer on my shoulder, which had to be removed before leaving. When you put all of these last-minute challenges together, one word describes the ordeal: STRESS. I now try to get all doctors' visits accomplished in November or December so we can have the time to act if anything needs further attention.

I once made a list of all of the frustrations that are often prevalent on the mission field in Zambia. It usually takes me about six months to become exasperated with all of the inconveniences or frustrations I face. In 2017, though, I felt like I had been in the frustration stage for six months, and it

was only month one. I prayed about it and asked my wife to do the same. God impressed upon me that I had to be careful because the last thing I needed was to take out my frustrations on the people around me, thereby discrediting my Christian walk. Another missionary friend told me that when these frustrations with people get overwhelming, he asks himself if he really loves the people. If the answer is yes – and it better be yes if you are a missionary – then it reminds him to be patient. He even laughs about these frustrations.

Frustrations with people or things include being cheated or dealing with repeat work orders for improper maintenance on the house we rented. Someone once told me in one of my past jobs that even in management you are not going to win them all. I have told some of our missionaries the same thing. You win some and you lose some on the mission field. Hopefully they balance out.

There are many frustrations that are common in houses in Zambia, so we came up with many fixes. When the electric is eliminated for eight hours per day, we use a rechargeable battery, which includes an inverter to achieve the voltage needed to run laptops, fans, a TV, and to recharge a phone. Cold temperatures into the 40s at nights or hot temperatures over a hundred, depending on the season, are common, so fans, air conditioners, or space heaters and heavy blankets are advisable. Water outages preventing water from coming out of the tap, or the toilet being flushed, can be overcome with backup water stored in a clean trash can. We discovered that the inconsistent water heaters were a result of an absent pressure-relief valve. No replacements were available so we learned to turn the heater on a few minutes before showering and turn it off afterwards to alleviate the

pressure. Water out of the tap is heavily chlorinated so we get our water from a well down the street using twenty-liter containers for transport.

Thievery can be discouraged by having a night guard and having an inexpensive part-time maid during the day. Ants, mosquitoes, and spiders are a constant battle, so we use bug sprays, mosquito nets, and fly swatters as deterrents. Some ways of countering the frustrations include employing a well-versed interpreter, buying a portable gas stove (for when the electricity goes out), socializing with friends, and watching television – as well as other activities such as journaling, evangelism, prayer, worship, and attending the Farmers Church, which is English-speaking.

Friends, for instance, help combat the loneliness that all missionaries sometimes face. We have many good friends in our small town of Choma, and have many others who are missionaries living hours away from us. Above all, I know by experience that all problems eventually get rectified. So I must remind myself often to be patient.

Frustrations outside the house include unending cues (lines). It is typical to have people cut in front of you. This delays the process and is irritating. Sickesses range from achy joints from bad roads to sicknesses like stomach viruses, headaches, the flu, colds, malaria, and dehydration. The heat is debilitating from mid-October through March (rainy season) while the cold battles you from June through mid-August. Hanging clothes outside to dry, after washing them by hand, takes time, so we use an old-fashioned wringer to expedite the drying process. Zambians are mesmerized by it and call it “the machine.”

My personality and training prompt me to get things done quickly. It had been imperative to do so in my previous career of selling software to hospitals all over the Southeastern United States. In that position, I had to set up usually nine appointments for the upcoming week on Monday, travel on Tuesday through Thursday, and do paperwork and follow-ups on Friday. So it was hard for me to get used to how long it takes to accomplish things in Africa. Many government agencies do not have computers, and paperwork often gets lost. This can cause a simple process to drag on – sometimes for years. Anxious planning – according to my timeframe, not God’s – can cause stress. My thinking changed when I remembered the scripture in Isaiah 30:18 “Blessed are all who wait for him!” I then learned that delays may be part of God’s perfect timing when things can’t be expedited. Be patient, I keep telling myself.

People in Zambia are mostly poor. In fact, I have heard that it is the seventh poorest country in the world. Early after graduating from our missionary training, a lady in Zambia came up to me in the supermarket parking lot saying she knew Bev, which she didn’t. She was crying about her father who had just died, and she needed what equated to \$50 dollars to freeze and bury the body. My first response was to only give \$10 but then it turned to \$20 and then \$30 as she kept crying, almost hysterically. Was this a premonition of everyone’s hand being out, I thought, and of Bev never being able to say no to the need? Would this eventually put us in the poor house? The episode left me with little or no money in my wallet, and I was irritated. There went my budget.

The woman said she knew the pastor in our area and she would give him the money to pay us back. I knew that again

she was being untruthful, and I did not expect it back. God convicted me of that selfishness and of not giving Him full control of my finances when He told me to meet a need. Afterwards, I felt like He was telling me to give the \$50, but I wasn't sure and was low on cash so I only gave \$30 worth. Later God spoke to me saying that I should donate where He tells me to donate, invest in people spiritually when He directs me to, and do not worry about the needs that go unmet for I can only do so much.

I therefore empathize with the people and know that this is the basis for God's anointing on the ministry. In summary, God seemed to say not to worry about being taken advantage of. Obey Him, and He will sort out the legitimate from the illegitimate needs.

Intoxicated people are very disturbing when they interrupt any of the ministries you have planned. I used to assign someone to just usher them away, but I knew that many of the area's present pastors (including me) came from a drinking background. God saved them and saved me, so we must give God a chance to also save the chiefdom's alcoholics. I therefore tell security to lead those people away and then minister and lead them to Christ. I also instruct security to tell an intoxicated person to come back tomorrow when he or she is sober so they can find out what commitment to Christ really means.

Alcoholism is a constant problem throughout Zambia. A husband will send his wife out to work in the fields only to take the money she earns and spend it on alcohol instead of school fees, food, clothing, etc. The culprits recognize that there is a void in their lives and try to fill it. They drink a kind of beer made from corn. We tell them that beer can't

fill that emptiness they are experiencing because only Jesus Christ can. This message has helped some villagers turn their lives over to Christ, leading them to give up drinking. Bev led about ten people to Christ one day in a village bar setting. She did not join them in the drinking but shared with them the “living water” of Jesus Christ. All ten of them committed their lives to Christ that day, and afterwards, one of the men even said to her that the words she said were burning inside of him. In the future, ministry to alcoholics in Zambia will be one of our prominent ministries.

Missed appointments are common as is someone leaving their office to go to the bank or lunch, requiring you to again wait. I have discovered that a way to pacify myself during these delays is to read the Bible app on my phone and pray. This especially works well when programs are late getting started, which happens ninety percent of the time. I once was asked to preach at a young adults’ revival, which would only take an hour, so I would have plenty of time to drive back home and attend the professional soccer game of the team of which I am one of the chaplains. What they did not tell me was that there was also a meeting involved in this group after my sermon and it lasted an extra one-and-a-half hours. The longer it lasted the more irritated I became until I opened my phone and started reading the Bible and praying. We arrived at the game with five minutes to spare, and I was at peace because of my new strategy to conquer frustration with the Word of God and prayer – all through my iPhone.

In addition to this new technique for handling disappointments, I know that God is in control. I can’t tell you how many times God has made something out of nothing in our schedule. One time we went to visit the



bishop of a large denomination in the area only to discover that he was out. We were there to ask directions to his churches in the new chiefdom we were canvassing. Well, his driver was there and he knew directions explicitly and was able to map all of them for us much better than the bishop could have. We then went to a school right next door unannounced and were able to meet with the religious studies teacher who scheduled us to speak to the whole school about Christ two months later.

One week after our initial trip we ventured out to the new chiefdom to meet the pastors at the churches that the bishop's driver mapped for us. When we got there we discovered that one pastor was in our hometown of Choma at a meeting with all of the pastors of that denomination. We turned right around and attended the meeting and met almost all of the pastors we were seeking. Wow! These three critical meetings opened huge doors within a week of each other. God had again turned nothing into something. They were each divine appointments where God caused us to be in the right place at the right time.

Irritating miscommunications are very common for a number of reasons. First, people in Zambia talk very softly and are hard to understand even when they speak English. I have actually asked at least one merchant to yell what he was trying to communicate and the volume ended up to be just right. To complicate things further, we speak English and they primarily speak Tonga. Zambians do not like to disappoint people so they will nod their heads yes even when they can't hear you or don't understand you. It is common for them to leave out key points of communication where misunderstandings can occur. I have learned the hard way to question them extensively to get the full picture.

For instance, when Bev or I have been asked to preach in a church, I used to think that it meant for one of us to give a 30-minute sermon. What it really means is that only Jack preaches a sermon for 30 minutes, since women typically do not preach in church. Bev handles children's church at the same time and possibly either or both of us conduct Sunday school. Not knowing this, Bev was invited to preach in a church on Sunday. When we arrived, the pastor said that I misunderstood him and that I was to preach. I had no sermons with me since I thought Bev was preaching. So, anxiously I prayed a silent prayer asking the Holy Spirit to guide me in one of my greatest fears: delivering an impromptu sermon. He honored my prayer, and it went well. It also gave me confidence for when it might happen again – and I guarantee that it will happen again.

In 2017, I bought a used Honda Bushlander motorcycle for our interpreter Caristo to use out in the villages. (I could have bought a cheaper, new off-brand bike, but our experience is that they last two years and the used Honda Bushlander lasts about ten.) The motorcycle would enable us to cover twice the ground in ministry. It took the paperwork seven months to clear in spite of me making numerous calls to check on the progress. Twice by truck, I had to send the motorcycle back to the capital city where the owner was located. On top of that, when we finally took possession of it, we discovered many mechanical problems in spite of having a reputable motorcycle mechanic check it out beforehand.

One year after the purchase, it was finally ready to go. Next came the frustrating procedure of getting a temporary license and then the permanent one for Caristo. This took another four months. At this point I was ready to scream!

But to make myself feel better, I kept telling myself that either this huge delay was orchestrated by Satan to keep it from the ministry or it was God delaying it because we were not ready in God's timing to evangelize the next chiefdom. We were disappointed when friends of ours left Zambia due to the frustrations, stress, and panic attacks. She was a consultant to teachers and worked in a number of schools to help streamline processes and create more teaching time to replace burdensome administrative time. In one school, she taught the teachers to distribute papers to students quickly so teaching time could be increased. They elected to do it their old, time-consuming way though which, when put on top of all of the other frustrations, was the last straw. They left Zambia shortly thereafter before their two-year commitment concluded, and they never returned.

The Africa Director of Operations for Overland Missions has a saying that really rings true: "You are not going to change Africa." I would add to that, "So do not let Africa change you (for the worse)." In other words, we should not let Africa change us from people of love and compassion to ones who are critical, bitter, and sarcastic about our surroundings. Prayer in the mornings combined with Bible study and journaling seems to give me patience with these frustrations. When I miss a day, I can count on being less flexible, more irritable, and even fearful throughout the day. I keep reminding myself of our calling to Zambia and the fact that God put us here for a purpose. He can make a way where many times the way seems bleak.

Another technique in conquering frustration and stress is to take at least one rest day a week. If God took a day off to rest when creating the world, we should take one also each week. Otherwise you are prone to becoming stressed

out as the daily activities and deadlines begin to compound the frustrations. God once told me to take this day of rest or suffer the consequences. What are the consequences of not taking one? The consequences can include irritation with ones' spouse, more susceptibility to sicknesses, possible burnout, ineffective preaching, poor planning, or strained relationships.

In March of 2017, our Zambian rental house was robbed when we were back in the United States. Thieves only took two sets of our good cotton sheets, some blankets, and a remote for the television. They broke the back off of our armoire since the front doors were locked. They left the microwave, sleeping bags, a portable gas stove, hardware, tents, and all of our camping equipment. They were later caught in an armed robbery, but we never recouped our sheets, blankets, or remote. To complicate things further, our duplex was supposed to be painted, at the same time the burglary was discovered, in anticipation of us arriving a few days later. The police would not let the painting begin until a full inventory was taken, which delayed our move for one week. Finally the inventory was complete, the paint was dry, and we were given the approval to move in.

Pulling up in the driveway, my wife exclaimed in horror, "Oh no, the interior paint is lime green!" I tried to look on the bright side (no pun intended) and remarked that at least it matched part of the background of one of our pictures on the wall. As a joke, we posted on Facebook saying that any of our missionaries who come to visit should bring their sunglasses to wear inside our house. All kidding aside, the delayed move-in, the thievery, and then the unexpected lime green paint color welcomed us to the frustrations of Africa early that year. It took a year to get used to the paint

color.

Seating in village churches requires sitting on a log about six inches in diameter held up by two forked branches. Your backside begins hurting after about ten minutes into a two-hour service. People in our interpreter Caristo's church were leaving the services early or asking him to cut his sermons short because of "fanny fatigue." So I decided to get the Christian carpenter in Choma to make 20 benches, which held about eight people per bench. It brought tears to my eyes when he generously quoted a very low price since it was for a church (and obviously he was touched by the Holy Spirit because of the need). The people were ecstatic about the benches and sang for joy as they unloaded them from my car-top carrier and the back end of my SUV. Word circulated around the farm, and that day they filled all 160 seats in the church instead of their typical 120. They even asked Caristo to preach longer than his 45-minute sermons because now they could sit in comfort and enjoy the service. I once asked myself if all of these frustrations were worth it. My answer will always be, emphatically, YES! Galatians 6:9 says, "Let us not become weary in doing good, for at the proper time we will reap a harvest if we do not give up." Seeing all of the lives delivered from the chains of sin that bind them before coming to Christ makes it all worthwhile. It is like putting a bandage on a cut that stops the bleeding and protects it against dirt. The cut is symbolic of the frustrations while the bandage is seeing so many people accept Christ into their lives and putting their past sinfulness behind them to become new persons in Christ (see 2 Corinthians 5:17). Their faces brighten as the light of Christ enters their spirits and their new walk with God becomes exciting and fulfilling (see Ephesians 5:8-9). This also helps them to withstand many of the inconveniences

or frustrations they deal with on a daily basis, ones much greater than the ones we have. Their testimonies confirm to the skeptical people that this newfound peace is real. The frustrations and inconveniences are still there but their new attitude is the big change.

In addition to the spiritually changed lives, it is encouraging to see all those people who God heals from physical illnesses. This is the thing that made the biggest impact on me. When I saw these miracles firsthand, I knew that God's healings were real and that He cared for the downhearted and physically impaired. How could I let frustrations rob me, and others, from these miraculous testimonies? It is true what the Bible says in Matthew 9:37: "The harvest is plentiful but the workers are few." These people need missionaries to deliver the Gospel to them and pray for healings. This is so much more important for Bev and me than living in comfort or convenience. Therefore, missionaries must constantly pray for perseverance and peace amidst the storm of frustrations and stresses around them.

Not only is the change that God instills in others through us encouraging, but the change in our lives as a result of God working through us is also uplifting. When I think back on the cushy life I had in the United States, my business life centered around sales goals, it does not even come close to the fulfillment we now enjoy. Sure, we miss our family, and I have to admit I miss some of the convenient fast foods, but these advantages fall way short of the eternal advantages we now enjoy in seeing people come to Christ. John 10:10 says, "The thief comes only to steal and kill and destroy; I have come that they may have life, and have it to the full." This scripture sums up the difference

between frustration and fulfillment. Satan (the thief) is the author of frustration and exasperation, while Jesus is the designer of a fulfilling and abundantly satisfying life. It is called His plan for our life. I have no desire to return to a secular job in the United States. I know too many people who are miserable in their jobs and are not fulfilled in the least. It confirms my lack of interest in returning to the business world when I see it portrayed in movies. When you are pursuing God's plan - which may indeed include the business world or other careers - you have much more tolerance for disappointment and failures because you know you are in the will of God. At times when my life swayed outside of God's will, I was miserable and my patience always ran thin.

At one time in Africa I was up to my ears in frustration. Nothing was going right, and things were taking way too long to eventually go wrong. Then I ran into an older lady about eighty years old when I was doing hut-to-hut ministry in one of the villages. She made my frustrations seem insignificant in comparison to hers. Her husband and her eight children had died from various causes. As a result, she had to resort to begging for support in the village. In spite of all of these tragedies, she loved Jesus and her faith did not waiver. Before leaving the village, I asked which church she attended. I then went to tell her pastor that the Bible specifically instructs churches to support two groups of people: the widows and the orphans. I could not find him though, so I gave our guide (who lived in the village) the message to deliver to her pastor. God also impressed on me to give her some money after I prayed for her.

Now that I have vented all of these frustrations to the reader of this book, I feel better. Thank you for your patience. If

## Frustration verses Fulfillment

you are considering becoming a missionary, though, you need to know these things so you can plan for the worst but hope for the best. The only reason that I can recall all of these is they are in my journal. As time passes, you forget about them until the next time. Is that encouraging or another negative?



## Miracles

I know that people are skeptical about testimonies of miracles in Africa. But God still brings about miracles there: I have seen them. I once asked a boy whose eye was swollen shut if I could take a picture of him with his eye that way and then another picture after I prayed for him when God healed him. He agreed, so I began praying. I prayed for him twice since the eye did not open the first time. Elijah in the Bible is our guide to pray for miracles multiple times if you do not see results the first few times. He prayed for a boy three times before he was raised from the dead. Afterwards it confirmed that Elijah was a man of God and that God's word that he preached was true (see 1 Kings 17:18-24). So after praying the second time, I told him to open his eye, and he was able to open it about half-way, and he had perfect eyesight! Two days later the boy's pastor called me saying that his eye was totally open without any swelling. It was a progressive healing and a great testimony to the power of God. It increased his and my faith and hopefully the faith of those who saw the pictures in our newsletter of his eye before and after the miracle (See 1 Corinthians 2:4-5). All healings are from God and we do not take any of the glory for the hundreds we have seen.

Americans' favorite question is, "If miracles still exist, why don't we see them in the United States very often?" I asked the same question when I first arrived Zambia. The

answer is simple. In the United States there are so many doctors, hospitals, medicines, etc., in close proximity to us that we think we do not need faith unless we are terminally ill. Then we call on God as the last resort. In Zambia, these medical clinics, hospitals, and pharmacies are often so far away that they are unreachable by the typical villager. Therefore God is their first and only resort rather than the last resort.

This type of faith and prayer with compassion opens the door to miracles. James 5:14-15 says, "Is anyone among you sick? Let them call the elders of the church to pray over them and anoint them with oil in the name of the Lord. And the prayer offered in faith will make the sick person well; the Lord will raise them up." Mark 16:17-18 says, "And these signs will accompany those who believe: in my name they will drive out demons...they will place their hands on sick people [in prayer], and they will get well." From these scriptures and many others throughout the Bible, I knew upon entering Zambia that God is still a miracle worker and that we can base our faith on these biblical truths rather than on our experiences. My many experiences with healings confirmed that truth. It is important to realize that it is God who does each healing and gets the glory instead of the person who it comes through. Nothing impacts an unbeliever more than experiencing a miracle firsthand. I have noticed that when I pray with compassion, more people get healed. It stands to reason because Jesus prayed with compassion even though he had to be dead tired from all of the requests for healing.

It is important to also realize that God works through doctors and medicine. I would never suggest waiting solely on a miracle at the exclusion of medicine and doctors. For

instance, I have been healed through operations from skilled doctors many times. At last count I have had an operation on my head for melanoma cancer, a nose operation (broken in a karate tournament), a shoulder operation (a casualty of high school football), a heart operation with stents (heart attack), a prostate operation to remove cancer, a knee operation (a wrong dismount in gymnastics), a hernia operation, and my tonsils taken out. Each of these was very successful, yet none of them came about as healings without doctors. When I am 65 years old and on Medicare, I will have a hip replacement unless God heals me in the meantime. As a result of all of these operations, insurance companies do not like me very much. So it is important that I find medical insurance coverage that does not disqualify pre-existing conditions. That is especially good advice for missionaries on the foreign field. Make sure your insurance covers you internationally and that you will also be covered for pre-existing conditions.

Bev's first introduction to healings happened when she was 14 years old. She had severe glaucoma in her eyes, and doctors told her that she would be legally blind by age 16. Her church youth group prayed for her one night just after the diagnosis, and her eyes were healed. She only had to wear contacts or glasses afterwards until she had cataract surgery in 2017. Afterwards, she only needed glasses for close-up vision. Unfortunately, now she can see at a distance all my facial imperfections – like shaving mistakes and wiry eyebrows needing plucking or trimming.

We have seen hundreds of miracles in Zambia, obviously too many to detail all of them. So I will describe the ones that made the biggest impression on me. In training with Overland Missions we were required to go on three

expeditions to practice ministering deep into the bush in rural villages. On the first night of ministry we were asked to come and pray for a man who had a respiratory condition preventing him from getting up for over seven days. I knelt to pray next to him in his house and became aware that I was kneeling on top of an anthill in the middle of his house. I humorously thought to myself, Now I will see how spiritual I really am. Could I pray with ants all over my pants and legs, casually brushing them away and not wanting to call too much attention or embarrass the patient? I prayed as best I could and after praying we left not aware of any changes to his condition. But that night he attended The Jesus Film about a half-mile from that man's house, and we discovered that he was healed!

That same night Bev prayed for a woman who was demon possessed, and she was delivered. This was my first encounter with a demon-possessed person. The woman was manifesting in a high voice, screeching like a cat. It scared me but I soon learned that we as Christians have authority over these demons. "In my [Jesus'] name they [Christians] will drive out demons" (Mark 16:17). We have the power over the evil forces of the Devil through Christ. The demon was cast out in Jesus' name and the lady returned to normalcy as a new person in Christ.

We always had to be careful when we encountered demons, because some demon-possessed people have super-human strength. A very good friend of mine discovered that firsthand. He was casting out a demon from a little old lady about seventy years old. As he was holding her down to keep her arms from flailing, all of a sudden she picked up his six-foot, two-hundred-pound body and threw him. I could not have done that even in my prime at age twenty-

five. He landed on his shoulder and has had problems with it ever since. The demon came out of her, though, and we all learned a valuable lesson: Demons can be very powerful, so proceed with caution. Luke 10:18 also confirms that we have authority over these demons: “He [Jesus] replied, “I saw Satan fall like lightning from Heaven. I have given you authority ... to overcome all the power of the enemy [Satan].”

On another expedition during our training, God spoke to me in His still, silent voice saying to wait until you see what happens tonight. In exciting expectation I waited and watched for God to move. After The Jesus Film, each of our missionaries going through training had about ten villagers in their line asking for prayer for some type of healing. Miraculously, all of the people in my line were healed from their various sicknesses or injuries. I was ecstatic, but I curtailed my excitement when I nonchalantly asked if anything strange had happened to the other missionaries that night. Some looked at me incredulously, answering that everyone in their line got healed. God healed many if not all the people that night, and I will never forget it! One healing that my wife experienced that night involved a lady who could not speak English. She motioned pointing to her arms indicating in Tonga that she could not raise her hands above her shoulders. After Bev prayed for her, her hands went all the way up to the sky and she gleamed with joy, hugging Bev profusely. That lady will never be the same after that touch from the Lord that night.

While training villagers in medical first aid, we saw a miracle we will never forget. A lady with polio, who had a very pronounced limp, told us that she was getting ready to get a built-up shoe and crutches since her one leg affected

by the polio had gotten worse with age and was shorter than the other. No longer would she be able to work in the fields, and she was concerned about harvesting enough food for her own support. She summed up her request by saying that she was not there to learn first aid; she was there to be healed. Some of my team members began praying for her and my wife, who was laying hands on her, said that she could feel adjustments going all over the lady's body, including her bad leg ... which was growing out to the normal length!

After the prayer, the woman got up in jubilation, declaring that she had been healed and had only the slightest limp thereafter. Her side, which overcompensated for her limp, was also healed of tightness and arthritis. The next year we returned to teach the village "Farming God's Way" and she was there. Surprisingly, she was the fastest and most productive of all the ladies who participated. Everyone knew this lady in this village, which was one of the largest ones in Zambia. God received the glory and others witnessed her new lease on life rejoicing with her.

Again while we were in training, we experienced a tremendous miracle deep in a remote area. A lady carried her son, who was about five years old, to us from her home over a mile away. He was feverish, limp in her arms, and his eyes were rolled back. After the prayers, he was still weak but was able to walk home. That night we were happy to see him return with his mother, who had a huge smile on her face. He was completely healed! We noticed that he even ran around with the other children just before our showing of The Jesus Film that night.

Nothing impacts me more in the miracle realm than when

heartbeats are brought back into the proper rhythm by the power of God. Having had a heart attack myself in 2000, I am very sensitive to heart problems, and Zambians have many of them. Every time we pray for a large group, at least three people come forward with rapid heartbeats asking for prayer to slow their hearts to a normal rhythm. When I pray for someone's heart, I can feel the rapid heartbeat, and I worry that the person might have a heart attack right on the spot. But after praying, I feel the heartbeat slow to its normal rate. Then a big smile creeps over the person's face. While serving meals at a large celebration of chiefs from Zambia, all of a sudden a large, full water tower about 20 feet high came crashing down and hit a worker in the head. We expected that there was probably a compound skull fracture and swelling of the brain. The gash on his head was so deep that we could see his skull. The fire department rushed him to a local hospital after some of our missionaries had a chance to pray for him. I did not hold much hope for his survival. Miraculously, he was released from the hospital the very next morning and the MRI showed no fracture. It was truly a miracle!

Living in remote villages seems to cause many joint problems. Paths are never level and can cause twisted ankles, wrenched backs, swollen knees, and more. Many older people have symptoms similar to arthritis. In one village an older lady had hip problems causing pain, especially when getting up from sitting. We prayed for her, and she got up dancing and exclaiming, "I am healed, I am healed!" Another healing occurred when a young man came to me at a school with a severe limp, saying he hurt his leg playing soccer. I prayed and his limp disappeared. Five minutes later he sheepishly returned asking for prayer for a stomach problem. I am sure he thought that if God can

heal a leg injury, maybe He could heal a stomach problem, too. He certainly can, but in this instance I was not aware of his stomach being healed.

We once were about three hours deep into a remote area and happened upon an eleven-person meeting of headmen. These were the leaders of surrounding villages. We introduced ourselves and Overland Missions and told them about some of our ministries. At the end we asked if any of them needed prayer for healing of any physical problems. Ten of the eleven responded yes, and we took turns praying for each of them. All ten were healed that day as God revealed His compassion for the sick and injured. One man had a knee problem, but after the healing he continued bending and straightening it. A huge smile radiated from his face.

Not all miracles involve healings. Our president tells the story of one of our large Overland Missions trucks, acquired in Holland, which broke down with starter problems. Our people were therefore stranded deep in remote Zambia. So he went to the closest village and told the people the problem. One of the male villagers took him to his mud hut and there in the corner was a pile of used parts. One part immediately caught his eye. It was a starter still in its new packaging. Unbelievably, it was the exact starter he needed. In a short time it was installed to replace the defective starter, and they were back on the road again. What are the odds that the exact starter would be there? Probably a million to one. With faith, though, and prayer all things are possible. In Jeremiah 32:27 God asks, "Is anything too hard for me?" After seeing or hearing about these miracles, my answer is a resounding no.



Jake is the Africa Director of Operations for Overland Missions and he experienced this miracle. When he was in college a friend asked him what he was going to do when he graduated. Jake answered that he wanted to become a missionary in Africa. His friend responded that he had always wanted to go to Africa and that his only connection to it was that his aunt went somewhere in Africa to be a missionary many years back, and they never heard from her again. Jake and his roommate ended up traveling to Zambia for the first time in 2005. While at the Siachitema Mission, they noticed a grave with flowers surrounding it. They went over to look at it, and unbelievably, the name on the tombstone was Jake's roommate's aunt. Out of all the places she could have gone in Africa, she ended up there where they discovered her gravesite. It is all by itself and is a tribute to her for the tremendous impact she had on the area for Christ.

Today the Siachitema Mission has a school, a clinic, an orphanage, and a church. I met the last living orphan she helped raise, and he offered to give Jake some magazine articles so he could show the family. This whole story is more than just a coincidence; it is a miracle that encourages Bev and me every time we pass by her grave when ministering in the area.

Not everyone gets healed. Bev has struggled with back problems and I have struggled with a hip that has needed replacement for years. Neither has been healed in spite of constant prayer. During our first training expedition, family members carried a young girl for two days to have us pray for her for a condition of paralysis. She could not move at first but began to sit up after we prayed for her for hours. She was not healed totally, though, so they had to

carry her home. During the same expedition, a young boy snuck away from school at lunchtime and came to us for healing of a cleft pallet. We prayed for him knowing that cruel children probably made fun of him often. Nothing happened and he left broken-hearted, as were we. But the Bible says that with faith we can move mountains (see Matthew 21:21), so we continue to pray in faith regardless of past disappointments.

I have noticed that the deeper we go into remote areas, the more miracles we see. Unfortunately, the deeper we venture into the remote areas, the more witchcraft we also see. People are often grasping for straws to be healed in these places. Hopefully, we get there before the witch doctors, who will make their sicknesses worse and even charge for their “service.” I used to fear them, but we as Christians have authority over them and the forces of evil as I have mentioned before.

Parents in Zambia sometimes do not realize the danger, though, and they tie strings dedicated by witchdoctors onto their young children, supposedly for protection. The children then get sicker and sicker. Other times the strings are just for decoration, like our jewelry. We pray for the child when we become aware of the string used as an idol. In one case we saw strings on a baby’s stomach and wrist. They had been put there by a witchdoctor for healing because the child had stomach problems. We prayed for the child and I told the mother that Jesus was the baby’s healer, not me and not the witchdoctor. I then asked permission to cut the strings off of the baby’s wrist and stomach. The mother agreed. A couple of days later the baby was totally healed.

## Commitments to Christ

“For God so loved the world that he gave his one and only Son, that whoever believes in him shall not perish but have eternal life” (John 3:16). God does love us so much that he sent his son Jesus to die for our sins. We can look forward to Heaven when we believe in Him and have faith in Him. Part of this scripture that people oftentimes overlook, though, is that people will perish in Hell for their unbelief in Jesus. He does not want anyone to go to Hell, nor does God the Father (see John 6:39). So faith in Jesus is the roadmap of how to get to Heaven and avoid Hell. It is through Jesus that we are saved: “I am the way, and the truth, and the life. No one comes to the Father except through Me” (John 14:6). The Bible in Ephesians 2:8 explains it further: “For it is by grace [God’s unmerited favor towards believers not based on our performance] you have been saved, through faith – and this is not from yourselves, it is a gift of God – not by works, so that no one can boast.” So we can’t work our way to Heaven; it is through faith in the Lord Jesus Christ that we receive our passport to Heaven.

Our main goal in Zambia has always been to evangelize the people – to get them to accept Christ as their Lord and Savior. We can then refer them to a pastor in the area who is well grounded in Christianity to disciple them (teaching them what is involved in being a Christian). Fear of rejection in presenting the Gospel is one form of what the Bible calls hardness of heart. In this case it revolves around the lack

of concern or an insensitivity regarding the spirituality of others. I constantly ask myself if I am grieving for those who are spiritually lost or if I am just going through the motions. We are required to give our mission agency the numbers each year of those people who come to Christ as a result of our ministry. These numbers can be a source of pride, and thus a snare, in claiming the results for ourselves rather than knowing that they come from God. King David in the Bible took a census of his army and his people to glorify his own strength. Due to his pride in conquering the other lands and armies, God moved against him and struck 70,000 Israelites with a plague. David then repented and God stopped the calamity (see 1 Chronicles, chapter 21).

“I stand at the door and knock. If anyone hears my voice and opens the door, I will come in and eat with that person, and they with me” (Revelations 3:20). We use many ministries to open the doors to the people’s hearts so that Christ can come in. As a result, we receive many invitations to speak on Sunday mornings or at revivals during the week. I always end my sermons with the opportunity for people to dedicate their lives to the Lord. We also use The Jesus Film to open the doors to the heart. This film is where we see the largest crowds, ranging anywhere from 150 to 650 people. Seeing the crucifixion of Christ – including the whippings, the beatings, the nails pounded through his hands and feet, and the agony of His mother and loved ones – softens even the hardest hearts. As a result, most people in the crowd commit their lives to Christ at the end. They go home changed by the impact of the sermon, the revival, or the film. It is amazing how word travels when the film is being shown in spite of there being no telephone land lines or regular cell phone coverage. But how so many people hear about it and attend the showing is beyond me.

People ask me often what the Bible says about how to commit your life to Christ. I respond citing Romans 10:9: “If you declare with your mouth, ‘Jesus is Lord,’ and believe in your heart that God raised him from the dead, you will be saved [go to Heaven].” The key here is the word believe. The belief we are talking about here is not just a casual belief; it involves obeying Christ by doing what is right and following Him as best we can when we feel He is directing us. No one is perfect though, and we all still sin the Bible says (Romans 3:23). As the last step to this commitment to Christ, I always lead the people in a prayer of dedication. I say it in English, my interpreter says it in Tonga, and the people repeat it out loud in Tonga. It goes something like this: “Lord, I am sorry for my sins. Please forgive me. I believe that you died on the cross for me and rose from the dead. Lord, I ask you now to come into my life, and I dedicate it to you now. Help me to follow you the rest of my life.” If you have never committed your life to Christ, you too can pray this prayer in faith and become a Christian today.

Why do people not commit their lives to Christ? In Africa it is no different than in the United States. People give me a myriad of reasons. Many say that they have had too much sin in their lives and are not worthy. God’s answer to that excuse is 2 Corinthians 5:17: “Therefore, if anyone is in Christ, the new creation has come: The old has gone, the new is here!” So in other words, he becomes like a butterfly emerging from a cocoon. In fact, Romans 3:22 says that God’s righteousness is given through faith in Jesus Christ to all who believe. So Jesus declares us as righteous to God the Father when we accept Him as Lord and Savior. This righteousness gives us strength to avoid sin as we experience the freedom of becoming a Christian.

Another objection people use is that this is not the right time. I respond that no one knows the day or the hour when the end of his life will come (see Matthew 24:36). I then tell them not to make a mistake in thinking that they will have plenty of time to make the decision for Christ only to have life taken from them unexpectedly and possibly face an eternity in Hell. The belief that God is a good God is true. But God is also a just God. He has shown us the road to Heaven in the Bible. It is up to us to decide whether to take that road or not. The Bible says that narrow is the road that leads to Heaven, but wide is the road that leads to Hell (see Matthew 7:13). So it is our choice as to which road we take according to our free will.

Like the apostle Paul, I believe my job is to get the people to commit their lives to Christ and then let the pastor baptize them (See 1 Corinthians 1:17). I baptized about twenty people once in a pond filled with stagnant water. It was about 50 degrees Fahrenheit and all of us were freezing in the water. It went well and my wife jokingly has offered me to baptize people on other cold days. Thank goodness she is now ordained and I can now volunteer her on the cold days (I tell her in jest). Seriously, though, we do not get into ponds anymore because of the parasites. I leave that task to the pastors or will let people dip their heads in a laundry tub for baptism as an alternative.

People sometimes ask what types of sermons resonate the best with Zambians. We have found that stories and props are the most effective. Jesus used many stories like “The Sower of the Seeds,” “I am the Vine and you are the Branches,” “and the Prodigal Son” to convey truths. We do the same. For instance, for the vine and branches sermon found in John 15:1-7, I take a thick rope to signify that Jesus

is like a strong vine of rope which will not let us down. Conversely, I have a thin rope which breaks signifying that anything we center our lives around that is not Jesus will always eventually fail us. Next I show two types of fake branches: one that is healthy with fruit and the other that is dead with no leaves. The healthy branch signifies Christians who God prunes to make more like Him. Their reward one day is in Heaven. The dead branch signifies those who have rejected Christ. They have not confessed their sins. Neither have they turned their lives over to Him declaring Him as their Lord and Savior, believing that He died on the cross and rose from the dead. I then cast the dead branch down to the ground saying that the destiny for those people is Hell. Lastly, I put the thick rope, signifying Christ on the cross, and attach the healthy branch on one side of the rope and the dead branch on the other side. This is a picture of Christ of the cross with the repentant criminal crucified on the one side of Him whose destiny was Heaven. The other side with the dead branch signified the criminal who was not repentant and mocked Jesus for not saving Himself, or either of them, from this terrible death. That man's destiny was Hell. I then relate the story to their lives, and typically many people decide to dedicate their lives to Christ to start being like the healthy branch of Christianity.

## Flexibility in Being Spirit-Led

Habakkuk 3:19 says, “The Sovereign Lord is my strength; He makes my feet like feet of a deer, He enables me to tread on the heights.” This scripture summarizes the goal of every Christian: to make God our strength and to make our feet symbolically like the feet of a deer. God truly is our strength, enabling us to achieve the impossible for Him. In likening our feet to those of a deer, the Bible is referring to the hind feet, which come down in the same hoof prints as the forefeet. My prayer is, “Lord help your guidance to be like a deer’s forefeet and my following of you to be like the deer’s hind feet.” When that happens, I know that God will enable us to tread on the heights of danger, like a deer does, without falling.

People ask us sometimes why we concentrate on children so much in our ministry. Some supporters would rather hear about the miracles for people their own age. The answer is that God told us to do so right from the start. How do we know what God is saying to us? There is a correlation between the time you spend with God in Bible study and prayer, and being able to discern His guidance through His still, small voice in our spiritual minds. In Zambia, children are like second-class citizens and often you will see a young child age four carrying around a one-year-old or younger on their backs almost all day while the mother cooks or socializes with friends. So we often go to villages



to give children's crusades, and we take children's games, Bible stories, scripture memorization, etc. In addition to the children's crusades, as of 2017 we have ministered in ten schools via our Light Union Club – mostly to 7th, 8th, and 9th graders. Hopefully when parents see the high regard we have for children, it will begin changing the culture of Zambia in elevating the worth of children in people's minds.

In the Bible, God is very clear about the importance that children play in any society or any family. In the example I gave in an earlier chapter, Jesus' disciples were mixing with the people one day, and the children were distracting them so they tried to send them away. Jesus responded to not forbid them to be with Him because the kingdom of Heaven is made up of "such as these" (see Matthew 19:14). In fact, Jesus went on to say that unless you have child-like faith in Him, you will not enter the kingdom of Heaven (see Matthew 18:3). Their children are the future leaders of their villages, towns, provinces, the Zambia government, and possibly even the world. Children are valuable to God and must be to all of us around them. Influencing them early for Christ will carry them through life with the solid foundation of the Lord Jesus Christ.

The needs of the people are great in Zambia and it is easy to get overwhelmed. You can't help everyone, so you must rely on God to direct you to which people to help. Our vehicle is our main ministry tool to reach people in remote areas. It is not a tow truck, taxicab, moving truck, or bus. We must protect it because if it dies, we are dead in the ministry water, so to speak. I heard a story that a missionary was asked for a ride once and upon agreeing watched in terror, as many goats were loaded into his SUV.

You can imagine the mess that resulted, taking him out of ministry for a whole day to clean up after them.

It is advisable to ask how many people will be traveling and what type of cargo you will be asked to carry if you give someone a ride. I have the policy of no animals, no overloading the car, and no detours to visit family members. These restrictions seem harsh, but we have learned the hard way to set these parameters. We once agreed to visit family members of an interpreter. He said they lived right on the way to where we were going and the roads were good. The reality was that it was way out of the way and the roads were terrible getting there. In fact, I had to go over large boulders and got stuck even in 4-wheel drive when a huge rock scraped the base of the car. We also have a policy not to give rides to people who we don't know who try to wave us down for transport. Rides to strangers are dangerous because of the threat of thievery – or even potential lawsuits in case someone is injured in an accident. Head-on collisions are prevalent in Zambia due to people passing on two-lane roads around blind corners.

In addition to physical needs, injustices are constantly evident and can also become overwhelming in ministry. God spoke to me regarding injustice to say that my job is not to administer justice in Zambia but rather to minister physical and emotional healing to the people from circumstances out of their control. In the Old Testament, the Levitical priests did not administer justice – the judges did. The priests' job was to intercede spiritually for the people.

In 2014, we received a lesson on being Spirit-led. Bev and I were featured speakers for a pastors' conference. I thought the head pastor had said to take about two hours

the first day, and he would fill the rest of the two-day event. Upon arriving with our two-hour sermon, he informed us that we were the featured speakers for five hours the first day and five hours the second. Panic gripped both of us as we wondered how we would fill eight hours of unrehearsed sermons! Off-the-cuff speaking has always been a major weakness of mine, but it has gotten better the more I read the Bible and write sermons. Anyway, we prayed fervently to ourselves and the Holy Spirit delivered the messages through us for the two-day conference. It went very well and the group has asked us back each year to speak ever since. Our response was, “Thank you God, this success was Your doing, not ours.”

At the end of 2016, God impressed on me at least six times that I needed to be available to Him on a moment’s notice in being led by the Spirit. I felt like God was saying that I was putting too much emphasis on protecting my car, in not driving after dark, in upholding my schedules, in saving money, in protecting Bev’s back, and in engaging in the fun of ministering to the Green Eagles Soccer Team. All of these are valid considerations, but they had become too prominent in my planning? Specifically, God told me that my schedule had become an idol (certainly not idle) since it was cast in concrete, and I was very proud of how full it was. I was not being flexible enough to deviate from my schedule and be available to God on a moment’s notice. I knew that God’s guidance should take priority over other commitments, schedules, opportunities, and ministry. He therefore wanted me to be “all in” and to walk by faith.

One time when I was convicted by God of this, I was eating lunch with a Christian friend. I admitted this spiritual weakness of my inflexibility, and I then realized how

many people I had missed ministering to because of this shortsightedness. Tears ran down my cheeks as I knew God was convicting me of it while gently encouraging me to change. I asked my friend to keep me in his prayers, as this major change would not be easy. It would have to take me to the next level of faith. What also led up to this direction to change was that sometimes Bev would feel led to minister to a certain person or village. I would answer that we couldn't because we would be late for our next appointment or it was getting dark outside, and I do not like to drive home for an hour or two on remote, dirt roads in the dark because it is hard to see the sharp rocks that could split a tire. If you break down in the dark and have to spend the night in your car, you could open yourself up to thievery and other frightening circumstances.

Another instance reinforced that I needed to seek God before making plans. When we were on an excursion to Buka/ Bougainville to investigate it for possible future placement from Overland Missions, we became aware of a large port city in Papua New Guinea named Lea. Since we were considering a sailboat ministry to the surrounding islands, it seemed like a perfect base for us. I used to take groups sailing in the British Virgin Islands when I was in my 20s, so I was qualified for this sailboat ministry to the islands if God directed us that way. On Buka we met some Americans who had been to Lea. They warned us that it was an extremely dangerous city. In fact, some of the missionaries from another denomination had been forced to leave due to lack of security. These Americans had even seen people gunned down right in front of their expensive hotel one day. So upon learning this, I promptly cancelled our plane tickets, having only incurred a small change fee, and negated any thought that Lea might be our next home.

Afterwards, God convicted me of making plans too quickly without seeking His guidance first.

One of the times I gave in to Bev to relax my driving policy (not driving in remote areas when it was dark) occurred after a Bible study in one of the villages. It was getting late and darkness would soon be upon us. A pastor asked if we could visit a funeral right down a good road and on the way home. Well, the funeral turned out to be about 15 minutes out of the way and on a terrible road. As we got out of the car, I was steaming inside because I again had been taken advantage of by an untruthful pastor. The irritation subsided, though, as the sermons that Bev and I gave tied in together perfectly – not by chance but by the Holy Spirit. I read Psalm 23 and talked about Jesus as our Good Shepherd, and Bev read a passage from Matthew, which also described Jesus as the Good Shepherd. The women were totally enthralled with her message, patting her knees afterwards, since women do not speak often in a funeral or church setting. We left as darkness set in, and we made it home about an hour-and-a-half later, feeling good about the sidetracked funeral. About two weeks after that, one of the pastors in the chiefdom said that the senior headman of the chiefdom was at that funeral and was very encouraged by our messages. He spread the word all over the chiefdom that Pastor Jack and Mama B could be trusted and to listen to their messages from the Bible.

When we returned to Zambia in 2017, I was determined to follow God's guidance – even if it meant cancelling an appointment, being late for one, or driving at night. My new commitment was challenged a few months into our stay. I had just moved the car out from our driveway when I noticed a man accompanied by a lady who was holding

the side of his face as he walked past. God immediately told me to stop him and pray. My human side started giving excuses like, Oh, I have to go to town and I'm running late. Another excuse was the fear that they would think I was crazy for stopping them to pray for his healing. What if he is not healed, would I be discrediting Jesus? Lastly I thought, They know where I live, and if he is healed, will I start having lines of infirmed people outside my door daily seeking healing? It would be much easier to let them pass and go on my way.

But God emphatically said to pray for him, so I did. He had a bad tooth and was in much pain. I finished the prayer and went on my way unaware of any healing at the time. The point, though, was that I followed God's guidance and did not let my excuses dissuade my decision to follow Him. Two weeks later a man flagged me down on that same road. I did not recognize him and usually I don't stop for people. This time I rolled down my window and stopped. He asked if I recognized him, to which I said no. He said that two weeks earlier he was walking with his wife down my street and had a terrible toothache. He said that I prayed for him and the toothache was healed immediately, and he just wanted to thank me. I mentioned for him to thank Jesus who was responsible for the healing, not me. So I thanked him for telling me this and we both went on our ways. God had rewarded my obedience by hearing this testimony of healing.

In 2017, much more fruit came out of our ministry. Sermons were much easier to write and were more effective as I sought the Holy Spirit's message (not my message) for the people. I was much more comfortable in delivering sermons. The Holy Spirit and advice from our interpreter

Caristo even helped me not to panic when I had to deliver thirty-minute sermons on an impromptu basis. I attribute this increased anointing to my new commitment to Christ to be available on a moment's notice. This requires a lot of trust and faith in him because some of the things He asks us to do are out of our comfort zone. For instance, Bev is a very good cook for just a few people. When the numbers get large, though, she admits that she is way out of her a comfort zone. That year I organized a pastors' conference for about forty pastors in Choma. We were to serve them a free breakfast as a sign of our appreciation for the job they do. Afterwards I was to speak for about two hours on receiving God's anointing on their ministry. Bev felt led by God to cook the eggs and sausage, and provide the rolls and hot tea. She was very nervous beforehand, to the point that I offered to have the event catered. But she knew that God was telling her to proceed. She did, and it went extremely well without a hitch. The lesson is that God is there for us when we trust him and follow his guidance. He will supplement our experience with the experience of others to make our venture successful. In this case, I did hire a caterer to work alongside of Bev, and the caterer helped give her the confidence and help she needed to be successful. Bev did seventy percent of the work and planning, and I was very proud of her flexibility and risk-taking.

In 2017, I also decided to seek God's help in writing sermons. That year in Zambia, I spoke in three church revivals, two pastors' conferences, seven churches on Sundays, two youth conferences, a government luncheon, seven discipleship lessons to the Green Eagles soccer team, and a church leadership training seminar. One big door opened when our chief agreed to let me minister to his headmen at the beginning of his monthly meeting. I

had hoped for this for years, and the door finally opened in 2017. In each speaking engagement I asked God what to address. Knowing that these sermons take much time to write, I was apprehensive, at first, due to time constraints; but God met me there, and I was surprised at how quickly they came together. They were also very effective since God was developing them, not me - and His sermons are anointed, meaning they answer questions, address needs, or touch the hearts of people where they hurt. In past years, speaking engagements were not as plentiful, so I could just construct a few sermons and duplicate them for each speaking requirement. I noticed, though, that God's true anointing was not on them. Looking back, that is probably why my speaking engagements in early years were few.

The other thing I did that year, at God's direction, was to let my wife critique my sermons, some before and some after delivery. She has a gift, which I don't have, of writing and expressing herself in complete yet simple terms. Thus, she wrote all of our newsletters to keep our supporters abreast of our ministry. Admittedly, my pride made it difficult to accept criticism either on how my sermon was worded or delivered, but as the Bible says "As iron sharpens iron, so one person sharpens another" (Prov. 27:17). Bev helped sharpen my sermons by simplifying them so that fourth-graders could understand them. She also helped with my delivery, encouraging me to include interesting stories, good voice inflection, and enthusiasm.

It is amazing how many figures of speech we naturally include in our speaking. Americans understand them but Zambians or other foreigners don't, since they do not translate culturally. It was challenging to break the idiom habit. They are so automatic in our conversational speech.



For instance, I once heard that a pastor in Nicaragua said that the situation was so funny that it liked to tickle him to death. The interpreter translated it into Spanish to say that it was so funny that the person scratched himself under his arms until he died! I still laugh about that one. God only knows how many times I fell victim to idioms in my early missionary years, resulting in translations being taken totally out of context.

In following God's guidance, it is not enough to do it eventually; God wants us to do it in His, not our, timing. I once felt God leading me to uplift a man in my Bible study with a word of encouragement that God would give me for him. I socialized after the study, and by the time I reached out to him he was gone. I left for Zambia the next week and thus could not follow up with him until I returned about eight months later. I tried to encourage him then but God's anointing on the situation was gone and so was God's message for him. He must have thought that I was an idiot as I struggled to hear from God a message that was not there. I resolved from that time on to follow God immediately when He is telling me to do something.

Having learned that lesson, God once spoke to me as I was listening to a devotion out in a village. I had no idea what the devotion was about since it was in the native language of Tonga. God said to tell Caristo, our interpreter, that He was going to raise him up to spiritual levels of leadership he never dreamed possible, but that he would have to remain humble or the opportunities would be taken from him. I told him the prophesy and afterwards casually asked what the devotion in Tonga was about. "Humility," he answered.

The year 2017 was very fruitful for us in Zambia as a result

of being led by the Spirit, not by Jack or Bev Fuller. We ministered to over 7,600 people and about 2,360 committed their lives to Christ. There were 121 healings and three deliverances from demons. We disciplined 30 people every two weeks and drove greater than 4,200 miles (mostly over dirt roads). For all of these ministry triumphs, we give God the glory for the ministry fruit that resulted. I am the first to admit what the Bibles says about this: “Apart from me [Jesus] you can do nothing” (see John 15:5).

In summary, here was and is my prayer in following God: “Lord, I give You all constraints, and I negate them by the power of Jesus. I pray that You cover both Bev and me with a hedge of protection against accidents, injury, or diseases. Lord, I dispel all excuses as to why we can’t reach the people – including excuses like the car, Bev’s back problems, other closer ministries on good roads, tiredness, the cost of gas (over \$7 per gallon), the cold weather, the hot weather, people not showing up for appointments, and more. Lord, You be the final say as to where we go, when, and for how long. Help me to release man’s limitations and be led by Your Spirit, trusting in You the whole way. I bind Satan from coming between Bev and me to cause any division or disagreement. Lord, You be our guide and help us to hear Your voice. For we know that your guidance is our proper direction in this ministry. Take all tiredness from us and help us to get out of the ‘comfort zone,’ being available to You at a moment’s notice. Whatever Your direction is, give us the courage, faith, and commitment to follow You every step of the way – not getting out in front of Your direction or falling behind it. Amen”

## Failures Are Temporary Setbacks

Failures are temporary setbacks that teach us, keep us from pride, and bring us closer to Christ. Jesus selected disciples and others to receive His ministry who the world would consider as failures. For instance, Peter, James, and John, three prominent disciples of Jesus, each failed to make Rabi and had to settle for a career as fishermen. Surprisingly, they helped change the world with the Gospel. In the Bible, the woman at the well failed in her marriages four times, and she was living with her fifth potential marriage victim. Yet Jesus spent time with her to affect her life. The result was that she evangelized her village (see John, Chapter 4). There are many more examples in the Bible of people rising to prominence from backgrounds of lowliness and failure.

As a missionary, one experiences many failures. You are in a foreign country with a completely different culture. So many of the things you try will end in failure through no fault of your own. The question to ask, though, is “What are God’s goals for me, and have I achieved them?” Otherwise you can trudge along for years without accomplishing much and not even realize that you have failed.

The real heroes on the mission field are the people who get back up after failures and refuse to quit. I have known missionaries who left the mission field after a year because of failures. I have known others who contracted malaria,

had to be emergency airlifted, and landed in intensive care in a hospital. They refused to quit and ended up back in the field six months later when healed.

In 2016 the president of Overland Missions and three of our top missionaries were bringing a sailboat that was donated from Puerto Rico to the United States. At four o'clock in the morning they hit something, which they thought was a whale; it split the hull and the boat started to sink. A helicopter from Puerto Rico rescued them but the boat was never found. Luckily it was insured. The motto of Overland Missions is "Any Road... Any Load... Any Time." After that incident, the president's wife jokingly said that maybe we should add "Any Whale" to our motto. That year our missionaries had many other catastrophes or disappointments. Even our house in Zambia got robbed when we were back in the United States. Satan did not like the progress for Christ that our missionaries were making, but the seasoned missionary knows that in Christ we are more than conquerors (see Romans 8:37), and we can do all things through Christ who strengthens us (see Philippians 4:13). Faith, supplemented by successes, keeps us going.

When I look back on my failures, it sometimes is painful. For each of them, significant time and money were wasted. They contributed in me not achieving my goals of ministering to a certain amount of people that year and achieving a certain amount of commitments to Christ. These unfulfilled goals highlighted the deficiencies like a blinking light. They called attention to the failed strategies mentioned below and motivated me to change them in successive years.

In our first year in Zambia, we had a Bible study that only

attracted an average of four people each week. To get there, we had to travel about an hour-and-a-half from our home over terrible roads. Other times, school principals would tell us to come for our Light Union Club Day only to have no students show up because it was after release time and they had not been told we were coming. Did they forget or were they from a religion that does not promote any religion other than their own? We will never know. The apostle Paul did not waste time ministering to people who were not receptive to him. He moved on to minister to those who would be interested. Jesus said to his disciples that when they are not received, to shake the dust off of their feet as a testimony against them (see Luke 9:5). The Bible also says that Jesus did very few miracles in his hometown because of the people's unbelief (see Mark 6:4-5). Yes, sometimes Jesus and the disciples experienced what the world would deem failure. It is amazing, though, how many times God turns nothing into something.

On one occasion when the students from a Christian school did not show up, Bev was able to visit a friend of hers and preach the Gospel right in the middle of what turned out to be a presidential election rally. Bev had no idea that it was a rally when she visited her friend unannounced. As a result, the women from a prominent denomination asked her to be the keynote preacher at a future women's conference with 350 ladies in attendance.

Our second year was marred by a government luncheon that only attracted the assistant to the assistant department head or the secretary. Some even had the audacity to take carry-outs to their friends when the luncheon was over. This was a far cry from having the department heads that were invited for the luncheon.

With each of these frustrations, we learned and did not repeat the same mistake. We switched gears and now disciple youths in well-publicized Club Days at schools instead of having Bible studies for adults in the mid-afternoon. Secondly, we dropped schools that did not cooperate with us, especially since there were other schools waiting in line to have us minister to their children. We got up to the point of 10 schools in which we ministered, some on a regular basis and others on an occasional basis.

Lastly, in 2017, I offered to host the government luncheon but only if it was part of the regularly scheduled meeting where all of the department heads would attend. This strategy was very successful as even the provincial secretary (the equivalent of the governor of a state in the United States) and his assistant attended. In summary, goals are important and they must be measurable. It is not enough to say one of my goals is to lead as many people to Christ as possible, because that is not measurable. Instead, an effective goal would be to say I will lead 2,000 people to Christ within six months. The number of commitments and the timeframe are both measurable. Some of the goal categories missionaries might select include:

1. How much money will you raise for support, and by what date?
2. How many calls and how many appointments will you achieve each week to achieve your support goal?
3. How many people will you lead to Christ, and within what timeframe?
4. How many people will you disciple within a certain timeframe?
5. How many crusades will you conduct within a certain timeframe?

6. How many schools will you visit in your Light Union Club within a certain timeframe?
7. How many times will you speak in Sunday services each month?
8. How many times will you preach in revivals over the next six months?

A group that is very hard to reach for the Lord is the white farmers. The key is to develop a relationship with them in order to earn the chance to witness to them. So I consider it “an infertile” ministry. Most of the farmers in our area of Choma grew up in Zimbabwe. In the 1980s the Zimbabwe government took the farms away from its white farmers and gave them to the nationals. In some cases, white farmers were given only twenty-four hours to pack their belongings and get out or get beat up by crowds of enforcers. The stress was so great that some suffered harmful medical conditions.

So why the aversion for Christianity? Here are some possibilities: 1). Blaming God for being deported from Zimbabwe and losing their farms; 2). Being raised in an anti-Christian environment; 3). Having a bad experience with a Christian or a missionary; 4). Having enough money to where they feel they do not need God. For whatever reason, they are hard to reach for the Lord. One of the white farmers even has a church service on Sundays but it is poorly attended. I have tried to reach out to these farmers saying that I would come and preach to their workers or show The Jesus Film in Tonga, but the interest was very limited. However, when farmers have agreed to one of these evangelisms, they see a remarkable change for the better in their workforce. For instance, we actually put our main interpreter Caristo on one of the farms to minister

## Failures Are Temporary Setbacks

and live there. After a short time of prayer and counseling, he noticed that nightmares (which would cause workers to wake up screaming) disappeared, as did the fighting among adults and children. The workers are now at peace, are more diligent in their work, and the thievery has decreased dramatically. He started a church on the farm with eight people, and it has grown to 120 most Sundays. Praise God!



## Down But Not Out Challenges Abroad

In the life of any missionary, he or she will be confronted with frustrations, medical conditions, fears, and failures. The apostle Paul described his strategy to conquer them in Philippians 3:13: “Forgetting what is behind and straining toward what is ahead, I press on toward the goal to win the prize for which God has called me heavenward in Christ Jesus.” As missionaries, our job is to manage these setbacks and deal with them with minimal participation from leadership of our mission agency. Conversely, when you have big decisions with possible grave consequences for the wrong decision, it makes sense to pray about it and ask the advice of at least two experienced people within your mission agency. Overland Missions requires its missionaries to do so. Bev and I are much older, and hopefully much wiser, than younger missionaries because of life experiences. Thus, our president describes us as “low maintenance.”

Severe medical problems are one of the main reasons for our people contacting the management of the mission agency. For instance, malaria left unchecked can evolve into a life-threatening condition. In 2016, two of our missionaries had to be emergency airlifted from Livingstone, Zambia, to Johannesburg, South Africa, where they recovered. Both thought that the severe headache, which often accompanies

malaria, was due to another, milder medical condition. By the time the symptoms were severe, their lives were in danger and vital organs began shutting down. In another case, we took care of their two young children for two days while doctors worked on their third child who had malaria. Then the mother contracted a severe case of it. I can remember waking up at night crying and praying that God would spare her life and heal her. Thank goodness He did through the doctors' capable hands. In both cases, these missionaries were down but not out because they returned to the field the next year. Yes, God can and does work through doctors and medicine. So we are to use those tools and not fall into the trap of strictly depending on a spiritual healing from God.

On three separate occasions we have been training missionaries for Overland Missions when they came down with malaria. The first two trainees got it within an hour of each other and both were throwing up at 4 a.m. and looked like death warmed over. The third had a new, weaker strain of it called scanty malaria. Its symptoms do not include any chills, fever, or vomiting so it is harder to detect. Within a few days of medications, each of the three was back on their feet and feeling much better. They were down but not out. Doctors in the United States are not accustomed to seeing malaria, so they are slow to diagnose it correctly, or they miss it completely. This is why we always take malaria medication back to the United States when we return. That way, if malaria rears its ugly head with either of us, we can counter it through medications.

In our own lives we also have had our share of medical conditions. For example, Bev has had a chronic back condition from traveling the rough roads. I pray for her

almost daily for healing and protection. She once was in the clinic for two days with IVs due to a parasite that she got from shaking hands with people at a funeral. On the way home from it, she ate an apple without washing her hands first, causing acute vomiting and diarrhea. Dehydration then followed and high blood pressure and thus the need for the IVs. A cold turning into bronchitis hampered her once. And in 2017, she had flu-like symptoms that required an antibiotic. Unfortunately, she was allergic to the medication and had to immediately return for a shot to deal with the problem.

My bouts with medical conditions stemmed largely from severe colds or sinusitis. The doctor, whose clinic is down the street from us in Choma, has medications that can counteract them quickly. We are blessed to have such a capable doctor who is well respected throughout Zambia living so close. I also need a hip replacement, which I plan to get once I am on Medicare in 2019. There are medical limitations, though, throughout the country. For instance, nowhere in the country are any doctors or facilities certified to put in stents for heart conditions. This concerned me, at first, since I had a heart attack in 2000, and I never know if blockages will occur in the future. I have to trust God, though, and do what I can; I take my cholesterol medicine nightly to keep it low and minimize my stress using prayer, Bible reading, and helping people – the latter being a great antidote to stress.

A must for everyone becoming a missionary is to have international travel insurance, which reimburses for medical expenses abroad and for emergency airlifting. This is required by Overland Missions for all of its missionaries. In my particular policy, there is no pre-existing condition

restriction, but currently you must have certified insurance in the United States to be accepted. One international medical catastrophe can easily become overwhelming financially, sending the victim into bankruptcy. I have seen figures that one emergency airlift can cost upwards of \$20,000. That only applies to the plane fare, including the medical attention on board; hospital costs would be in addition to that.

Regarding the food in your location, if certain foods make you sick, politely refuse them by saying that your American stomach can't handle it, but you still love the people who are serving it and appreciate them for offering. This is in no way a reflection on how you feel about them. It is just something that is out of your control. For instance, relish and nshema (which is similar to grits but made with a corn extract) is the staple food in Zambia, and people eat it for lunch and dinner daily. I have tried nshema a number of times and although I like the taste, it often makes me sick. So I politely refuse it, saying that my American stomach can't process it correctly. People seem to accept the excuse, especially when I join them for dinner with some of my American food, which they always want to sample. There is nothing worse than being sick with vomiting or diarrhea when you are out in the remote areas without toilets.

The weather can also be a hardship. In 2012 when camping out during our training in Zambia, it fell to 30 degrees Fahrenheit at night. I went to bed in my new mummified sleeping bag wearing a ski jacket, a long sleeve shirt, a hoodie, long underwear, and heavy sox. I woke up at 3 a.m. freezing and just had to bare it until the sun came up. That morning I noticed that our water and butter were frozen. I have heard that the inner linings for warmth in sleeping

bags wear out after five years, but mine was new. I found that to be true, as my sleeping bag seemed to be even much less thermal in year five. On the other hand, the temperature can also be unbearably hot in Zambia. Typically in late October it rises above 100 when the rainy season is about to start. We have been on our base near Livingstone when it was 128 degrees Fahrenheit. It drains you! Sleeping is difficult, as even fans are not helpful since they are only blowing hot air. One missionary said that she would go to bed with wet night clothes to cool off, only to find that they were completely dry twenty minutes later. We sometimes put wet rags around our necks to cool us during the day. Getting anything accomplished from 2 p.m. to 5 is difficult. Good drinking water is a must if you do not want to get sick. We take de-wormer pills every six months to help protect against impurities in the water and food, and on people's hands. It is not a sure preventative but it helps. We take our clean water with us wherever we go, as we have sometimes gotten sick from village well water. Our water is from a trusted well down the street from our house. We do not trust the water that comes out of the tap because it is heavily chlorinated. Wells, called bore holes, in the bush range from water tasting good to tasting horrible from pipes that have rusted.

It is important to make sure you have enough water to last your whole trip. On one trip with our fourteen trainees, we ran out of water on day five of a seven-day camping expedition. As the others went out to minister, my job with Bev was to dig down deep into the water table of a dried-out riverbed. Once we found water, we had to strain the sand and bugs out of it through our clothes, carry it to the campsite, and boil it before we could drink it. We saw cows drinking from other holes in the dried out riverbed and

wondered if the impurities of their mouths was affecting our water. It turned out, though, that we were upstream in the current of the water table so it did not matter. Digging for water is a lot of work for a five-liter jug that doesn't last very long.

Speaking of water, Overland Missions has a well-repair division. It is fun to see villagers' faces when they taste the clean water after the rusty pipes have been replaced with new ones. Word gets around quickly and all of a sudden we are barraged with many other requests to fix other wells.

When I also think of being down but not out, I think of a good Zambian friend of mine who has an extraordinary story of rising above trials. When he was seven years old, his father died and his mother became the chief breadwinner and manager of the family. They were very poor as a result and had to stretch things to the extreme to manage. My friend owned one school uniform, which also substituted for play clothes. His school was 30 kilometers (18 miles) from his house, so it required him to get up at 2 a.m. to arrive at school by about 8:30. He finished school at 4:30 and made it home by 10:30 p.m. – just in time to take off his school uniform so his mother could wash it and partially dry it over the fire before he repeated the schedule the next day. It was very uncomfortable putting on the wet uniform the next morning, especially when the temperature was in the 40s Fahrenheit.

On weekends he would sometimes chase an animal for over six hours to spear it and bring it home for the family to eat. His personal resolve was evident in earning an education and becoming a tremendous Christian. The way he took care of his family was very admirable and makes

the trials that most of us experience seem like nothing. It is no wonder that God rewarded his perseverance with being a leader in the community. He was down many times but never out. I took him to tell his testimony to a Christian school, and the principle said afterwards that he has never seen his students impacted so much by anyone.

Setbacks are common and can often become opportunities in disguise. When I think of setbacks leading to opportunities, our interpreter Caristo comes to mind. He has been with us since we moved to Choma and is like a son to us. He was born out of wedlock and his father decided never to love Caristo because he was forced into marriage through the unwanted pregnancy. At age seven, Caristo's grandfather arranged for all of the grandchildren to be dedicated to the witchdoctor for "protection." The sign for this was a tattoo. The witchdoctor would use a razor blade to make about five slits in a person's neck; then he would put cooled potash from a fire on it, causing a permanent mark like a tattoo. Caristo's father agreed to have all of his children dedicated to the witchdoctor and tattooed except Caristo, declaring that he did not care if Caristo died tomorrow.

At age fourteen, Caristo's mother, father, and grandfather all died. He wondered how this could happen since they were all dedicated to the witchdoctor for protection. Yet they were dead and he lived. He immediately went to his boarding school principal and said that he would have to drop out of school since his parents just died and he had no money for school. The principal looked at Caristo's grades, which were very good, and agreed to give him a scholarship until graduation in four years...if he became the school janitor and even lived there during vacations. Caristo agreed to the deal and graduated number one in

his class! As a result of his number-one ranking, he was qualified to take a financially lucrative government job or even go to college, like his friends did. But Caristo, having become a Christian, passed on these for a greater opportunity – pursuing God’s call to ministry. He is now a full-fledged missionary with Overland Missions and is spreading the Gospel in the chieftom adjacent to ours. He was down all through high school, and his earlier life, but he wasn’t out.

A caterer once cancelled a venue the night before a provincial government evangelical luncheon that I had planned. I expected 45 top leaders to attend. So I quickly changed venues in a panic and advertised the change and the alternative worked well: We were down but not out.

At the funeral for our chief’s wife, the sound-system crew was two hours late. So the organizers asked me if they could use my sound system, which was powered by the battery of my car (there is no electric in remote areas like this). I agreed, and it solved the problem. In appreciation, they asked me to speak while committing the body at the gravesite. There were over 1,000 people in attendance, and the service was broadcast over the radio to thousands more to hear my evangelistic message. At another funeral where again I committed the body to the grave, I could not find my wife in the sea of people. When I finally found her and asked her where she had been, she answered, “Oh, I was casting out a demon from a lady in attendance.” “Really?” I exclaimed. “Casting out a demon at a funeral!” I did not realize until then that in Africa, demons oftentimes manifest at funerals.



## What's Next?

Here is a practical way to proceed before becoming a foreign missionary. Check with your local Center for Disease Control (CDC) for the suggested or required medications or inoculations before traveling. Some must be taken in certain intervals with others, so start early to make sure you do not run out of time. Certain ones are only available at the Health Department while others can be given at your doctor's office. Secondly, research the travel restrictions or any uprisings for the country you are visiting. And Immigration must be researched to make sure you are in compliance. Many on-line sites can help in this research, for example, the U.S. Embassy of that particular country.

When we travel to Zambia, it looks like we have our own pharmacy packed. We take copies of the doctors' prescriptions or the pharmacy receipts in case we are questioned by immigration. We try to anticipate any medical need we might encounter by following the advice of the Center for Disease Control and what medication from the U. S. would help in the area to which we are traveling. In addition to prescriptions, we take along over-the-counter medications such as athletes' foot cream, ear drops, eye drops, sore throat lozenges, nose drops, etc.

Research as much on-line as you can about the area. The exchange rate, the language, the economy, expenses, the

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food, drinking water, etc. are all valid considerations. In addition to on-line investigations, take an exploratory trip before making your final decision. Chapter 4 of this book, entitled "Assessing an Area" should provide helpful considerations. In summary, see if the climate, the expenses, the living conditions, and the spiritual needs in the area match with your capabilities. Meet with as many resource people as you can during the trip for answers to your questions. A pastor in the area is a great resource since he will give you the straight story on conditions in the area and can introduce you to other people who can help.

The three rules that Overland Missions has for all of its missionaries are as follows:

- 1). Protect the anointing (walk in righteousness).
- 2). Never alone (there is security in numbers).
- 3). Whatever it takes (go the extra mile for success in ministry).

Upon arriving in an area that does not speak English, find an interpreter if you have not already done so: This is your first priority. Without being able to communicate, you are in for some rocky times. Your lodge will be a great resource for information like this. They cater to foreigners, and language barriers are not new to them. They can also give you an estimate of the going rate as to what interpreters charge.

Purchase a phone right away and/or a SIM card. Different phone companies have different plans, and one is sure to fit your needs. iPhones from the United States have recently been unlocked to accommodate SIM cards in many countries. As within the United States, your phone is your

lifeline abroad.

Visit the area hospital soon after arriving and meet the local doctor. You do not want to go there for the first time during an emergency. Friends of ours had a serious encounter with malaria and luckily I was able to accompany them to show them where the hospital was and where to go for admitting. You will want to interview the doctor(s) to decide which one is most capable, and then brief him or her on your medical records and insurance.

Above all, pray and read your Bible before proceeding on an investigative trip or a full-time placement on the mission field. What gave me the most strength in stepping out in faith amidst uncertain circumstances was Matthew 28:20: “And surely I am with you always, to the very end of the age.” These were some of the last words Jesus spoke to his disciples before sending them out, on their own, to carry the Gospel to unbelievers. These words are also for us as foreign missionaries to help us to know that we can trust God in any direction He sends us. “If you seek him [God], He will be found by you, but if you forsake him, he will forsake you” (2 Chronicles 15:2). Our job is to seek God’s direction, and follow it. God will then bless you and His work through you.

In closing, I would like to say a prayer especially for those people who are considering following God’s plan for their lives.

“Lord, I pray that You would open the doors to Your plan for their lives. You know their strengths and weaknesses and where they will be successful and fulfilled. Above all, help their desires to be toward the short- and long-term

## What's Next?

plans You have for them. Give them the courage to step out in faith by being led by Your Spirit. Draw them close to You in this process, bless them, and reassure them that You are right there with them to give them peace and guidance amidst the uncertainties and trials of life. Amen.” (See Jeremiah 29:11-13)

## Bibliography

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## *Missions Untangled Released by God's Calling*

After devoting many years to family and professional life, Beverlie and William “Jack” Fuller, ages 54 and 57 respectively, decided to embark on the biggest challenge of their lives: becoming missionaries to Africa. Nothing could have prepared them for the challenges of sicknesses, ministering in the bush, and massive communication issues, just to name a few. But God’s direction was clear: “Spread the ministry net wide.” Fruits from their ministries resulted almost immediately in the form of miracles, deep relationships, and new commitments to Christ, as doors to ministry opportunities began flying open.

The stories of their experiences are not only entertaining but can serve as a how-to guide for prospective missionaries. Many mistakes were made resulting in failures, but God was sympathetic to Jack and Beverlie’s inexperience and rewarded their perseverance. To God be the glory for leading them through the Holy Spirit to accomplish His objectives through them!



978-1-940725-61-1



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