

## CHURCH PLANTING MOZAMBIQUE

Primarily dealing with Schwabbe, Senna and Lonway people in Mozambique. David Hooten put the report together.

Background: Mozambique is a country that has been in war a long time. Basically a civil war that nobody won. During the civil war the Americans and the Communists sided with the different parties in the country. What really opened up Mozambique to the west was finally as this war progressed, nothing was left. Mozambique was devastated. There is no food. There are no medical supplies and the party that was supported by the communists went to Russia to ask if they would send food and their response was that they didn't have food, but that we can send you guns. We can send you ammunition, then the Mozambique people turned to the west and said we don't need any more guns or more ammunition what we need is food. That opened Mozambique up to the west. The war ended not because anybody won but because people got tired of fighting. Mozambique being devastated by the war that went on for years, has become open to the gospel.

I'd like to be able to say to you that we as an area leadership, regional leadership team looked at Mozambique and we had an intentional strategy of exactly how we would go in and begin a church planting movement. But I can't say that to you. I can't say this plan or that plan worked. We suspected that Mozambique would be open. When we had a regional leadership meeting, in Nairobi, Kenya, we began to prioritize the countries of Eastern and Southern Africa. We then brought the Administrators in and asked them to give a report on their country. Out of that report we would then prioritize in our region which would be the first priority country. Out of that country we would ask for 2-3 people groups that they would identify and say this people group for whatever reasons they listed are responsive to the gospel. They are un-reached but we believe they are responsive. Then we would prioritize people groups. Mozambique came up as the number one country. I think 3 of their people groups came up in the top 10 as being also the highest priority people groups in our Eastern/Southern Africa region. Those [people groups] were the Yau, Macuau and the Lonwayschwabbe [sorry about the spelling I have no idea]. So then in the region we began to emphasize Mozambique as the country where we as an area would begin to transplant or if we had transfer missionaries we would encourage them to consider Mozambique. In a very short time frame of 2 or 3 years, Mozambique went from having one couple that lived in the capital city to having people that had been transplanted. [ 3 church developers] One couple located in the north working with the Macuau people, another couple working with the Lonwayschwabbe people. Another couple in the Moniqueca province working with the Senna and Shonna people. As these missionaries began to work, what we suspected to be true was verified, that the war brought the people to devastation. If you have been a student of church growth you know that when people have been in war and all of the things that they founded their lives upon have been stripped away, they become responsive to God. Their witchdoctors, their traditional doctors can not help them, they can't stop the bad things from happening, their ancestral spirits can't help them or couldn't save them from the devastation of the war.

The droughts, the famines, the devastation of the war, these things continued. All of the things they had founded their lives upon had been ripped away. At the end of the war, being devastated by war, all of these foundations ripped away, and many of the people were transplanted from their traditional lands into cities to try to escape the war. That then created what I believe to be a spiritual environment which God could use to bring the people to harvest.

Church growth tells us that when you find a harvest the harvest will have an open window that will last from 5 to 7 years. When harvest is there you have 5 to 7 years to reap and then the doors will close. As our missionaries began to go in we began to see a harvest.

Avery Willis wanted to see a harvest area. He was told to go to Mozambique and go to Zambia. In one area within the last two years church planting has increased by 100%. There are now 200 churches in the district where John Dinas is working. The national missionary that John works with, in the last three years – Nicolau, has baptized over 6,000 people. John Dinah in a 10- week period [July-Aug-Sept] baptized 370 people, this year. As a boy growing up in Zimbabwe, I remember wondering why it was I would go to my African friends and sit down in their huts [which were round mud huts] and we would chant the traditional songs. Usually the leader would chant and we would repeat that line and we would go to church, which was a rectangular brick building, people sat on wooden benches and we sang translated Broadman hymns. I remember as a boy wondering why did we have this disparity between the heart and culture of the people and then the church that they went to. It's not that our missionaries necessarily went out to do something wrong we basically transplanted what we knew. That is what we knew as church. We transplanted what we knew as church. But all of us in Africa have come to realize that that church we planted has some weaknesses. Many Africans will say that there is a parallelism in African faith there is a dualism – at this point is my Christian faith and at this point is my culture. And these two don't mix. So in other words my Christian faith does not speak to the issues of my culture – ancestry worship. So when that is an issue for me if I have a disaster in my family, my child gets sick, my church doesn't speak to this issue but my culture does. So I'll go to the one in my culture who can explain to me the problem that I am facing. So we find this parallel track moving along between their Christian faith and their cultural and these two don't mix. I prayed that one day that I would be able to see a church that represented the heart of the people. The concept that we all, as church planters, strive for and look for is that indigenous church. It's like a vapor trail that you're trying to follow. We've debated it, we've struggled with it, we've tried to define it, and we've tried to say how do we start it. If I as an external foreign agent come in will that mean that automatically there is going to be problems with that indigenous concept? When we went into these Lonway/Senna churches the buildings were built out of mud and pole. They were thatched with banana leaves and we sat down inside the building on cut logs. These logs were cut logs with forks in them and they put logs across them] which was the form of seating they used traditionally. When we sat down then they began to sing, the ladies danced, the elderly ladies came up to do a dance of welcome for us as the visitors. They had their traditional instrument shakers and drums. They began to chant these songs that they had developed out of their faith, there was spontaneity and great joy. When I was sitting in there, in my spirit I said, " this is what we have been searching for, this is what we have been looking for". This is what I have been looking for from my years of ministry to see, one time in my life - that expression of the gospel that comes when the gospel plants in the heart of the people. Then out of their heart

you begin to see the form of the church take its roots. When we saw this responsiveness then of course we have a responsibility as managers of church growth in what we are going to do. In Mozambique what they emphasized is leadership training. John has emphasized leadership training. What we know in church growth is that as the church moves if we don't train leaders that can maintain the growing edge that the growth will roll over on top of itself and stop. Because we don't have those who can continue the growth of the church movement. Although we suspected there would be some responsiveness in Mozambique we didn't know and we didn't go about an intentional strategy of reaping a harvest because we didn't know what we would find. We suspected a harvest. We began an intentional strategy of putting missionaries there who could be transferred for various reasons. I can tell you the missionaries who are in Mozambique today, when you look at them today and where they've come from, you will just know only God could have put these people here at this time for this period of the history in Mozambique. Each one of these missionaries is planted in a specific people group. As they got into the people group and began to preach the gospel using the language of the people, which there has been a Portuguese colony for 300 years, there was responsiveness. As we began to see the responsiveness the people themselves – David emphasizes this in his report, “the church growth that we see is growing on the feet of Mozambican Christians themselves.” I think that is the goal of a church planting movement. You and I can never carry out the church planting movement on the basis of our work alone. Church planting movement must at some point in time be captured into the heart of the people themselves. Then they get that vision and flame in their heart to take that message to those around them. Then as you begin to see it you begin to see how God uses this network in the lives of those people to spread the gospel. Many parts of Africa the gospel as a church planting movement starts will spread along kinship structure lines because the African family is so close. Because relationship is so important, when he becomes a Christian the natural avenue for the gospel to flow is through those kinship structures, relatives. In most African tribes there is a totem system. You're born with that totem and an African will stop in many tribes and will talk to a person until he establishes a relationship. Who are your relatives, who is your father, who is your uncle, where did your mother come from, what is your totem? When they establish relationship then they understand the basis of that relationship and what the parameters of the relationship will be based on those factors. So as this person receives the gospel in his heart, that begins to open that avenue of the gospel to flow. I think this is what we are seeing amongst the Schwabbe / Lonway people. Is that as the gospel is planted there a responsiveness has come that the gospel is beginning to flow along those lines. Because it is flowing so quickly there would be no way that we could follow it and keep up with it if we went in with a plan to building church buildings and starting with a resident seminary program to train them because it's just moving too fast. So the people themselves as the gospel is flowing through their kinship structure lines and tribal lines then they themselves are having to determine how will we house that faith. Where will we worship? What will our house of worship look like? What will it be? Many of us have grown weary in Africa of the continual asking of our people they just come to us always wanting something. It is because that is what we've taught them. Many of our African brethren want to know what their relationship to me is? If I don't go to his home and sit with him through a day of mourning when his relative has died or I don't go sit with him through a day of celebrating the birth of his child, or the marriage of his daughter then he begins to recognize the relationship he has to me is one of giving. That what I bring to the relationship are my things. So he comes to me

to ask me for my things. What is needed in a church planting movement with our missionaries is that we bring ourselves to the relationship. In that relationship then we can begin to move with them in the church planting movement in terms of what God is doing.

We went to one of these houses of worship and when the meeting was over, here are these people devastated by war, the poorest. I think on the human index of suffering come up high on the scale. Avery and I were about to leave. Avery had spoken and I had shared, they had prepared a meal for us and we were about to leave and the people had a going away service or ceremony. One lady came with a big bag of rice and put it in the back of the truck as her gift to us as we were leaving. Another man came with a stalk of bananas on his head. He took this and put it in the back of the truck as his gift to us as we were leaving. Another lady had made two baskets woven from the reeds; she gave one to Avery and myself as her gift to us as we were leaving. Another man brought a little homemade wooden cage, in the cage were two guinea pigs. They are not raised as pets in Africa! As we left that place, I thought, "this is the evidence of the power of the gospel". When the gospel begins to flow in the hearts of the people and an indigenous church planting movement comes, we need to take every skeptic to a place like that to see what happens when the gospel is planted in the heart of the people and is express in this natural form. They begin to put the structure on this that fits their culture and see the vitality of the movement.

Questions:

Language Portuguese do they speak this in their home? Are their tribal dialects – yes there are.

Observation made that Angola is going to experience the same thing based on this information in Mozambique.

Dave Hooten emphasizes that the flow has to go on the feet of the 'local' people because they can get into places that we are unable to get into and live places where we can't live.

TEE for leadership training. Process used: Dinah meets with leadership groups around his area where he has centers located. They walk out to and he spends a week with them camping in the bush. He just goes out and lives with the people in the forest. HE will send the word with the people at a certain place and he goes out to meet him. Then the leaders will come walking in and they will have a week together. He then will teach TEE materials to those leaders. They will talk together and share to together their problems and what they are confronting after that week; they will then go back out to their areas. Question was do these leaders go back and have other training sessions with new Christians? This is what Dinah encourages the leaders to do. Question – what constitutes a church? Is it a group that is gathered around one of these leaders? Is it a building? That is one of their problems in that the Portuguese have a very traditional definition of what is church. That has been very difficult for them to break that concept. The two hundred, I don't know how many preaching points have 200 – 300 members. Even 300 or 500 hundred are still called 'preaching points' because they don't fit the definition of the Portuguese but they have been working on breaking that down. To the Portuguese it's a building with an ordained leader. Ordination is very, very important. John and Nicolau have been working to overcome

that idea that is not from the people but from the organization. John and this guy would say that where you gather the people around a leader – that's church.