

A MESSAGE FROM AFRICA

(By Drew Brown)

NOTE: We asked Drew Brown, our missionary in Mozambique, Africa, to share his view of partnering with Grace Community Church.

Greetings from Mozambique. I have the pleasure of writing on behalf of the missionary community that Grace Community Church is actively partnering with to extend the gospel to the ends of the earth. We are scattered throughout the globe, are engaged in diverse ministries, and come from various walks of life. Yet we share the same biblical foundation, the same church, and the same joys and sorrows.

The Same Foundation

The biblical basis for missionary activity doesn't begin and end with the Great Commission (Matt. 28:18-20). Jesus' command to go and make disciples is merely the high note on a glorious missiological symphony found throughout the Scriptures. God's heart has always been to bless the nations through Israel (Genesis 12:1-3), and Jesus Christ came to fulfill her original charter (Romans 9:5). We often overlook key Scriptures on the mission of God because they occur right before an important event: *"...and you shall be to me a kingdom of priests and a holy nation."* (Exodus 19:6, before the Ten Commandments); *"This day the LORD will deliver you into my hand...that all the earth may know that there is a God in Israel,"* (1 Samuel 17:46, David & Goliath); *"Likewise, when a foreigner...comes and prays toward this house, hear in heaven your dwelling place and do according to all for which the foreigner calls to you, in order that all the peoples of the earth may know your name and fear you."* (Solomon's dedication of the Temple, 1 Kings 8:41-43).

Jesus came, accomplished the atonement in accordance with the Scriptures, and dispatched His followers to carry the good news (Luke 24:46-47). Two thousand years later, we continue to carry this message to the last frontiers. We know the Lord enables us to accomplish His mission because of something we learn from John's heavenly vision: *"After this I looked, and behold, a great multitude that no one could number, from every nation, from all tribes and peoples*

and languages, standing before the throne and before the Lamb...crying out with a loud voice, 'Salvation belongs to our God who sits on the throne, and to the Lamb!'" (Revelation 7:9–10)

The Same Church

We go because we are sent. There is never going without sending: *"And how are they to preach unless they are sent?"* (Romans 10:15). The local church calls, commissions, and sends missionaries today just like they did in the book of Acts (Acts 13:1–3). The local church safeguards the gospel, duly practices the ordinances of baptism and the Lord's Supper, and practices discipline in order to ensure the integrity of Christ's ambassadors. We live in a world where false teachers and phony churches abound - both in the United States and also in the majority world - and these three components protect the church and those whom it sends.

Similarly, each missionary seeks to either establish or participate in the life of a local assembly of believers where they are stationed. We work to communicate a pure gospel, baptize confessing believers, remember the Lord's death, and establish communities of disciples. Keep in mind that many of us serve in places where the gospel has not yet taken root. We need your prayers to sustain our walk with the Lord, because we can't simply go to a regular place of worship. We also need them as we seek to shepherd groups of believers into communities where the three essential components of a church are honored.

The Same Joys and Sorrows

The missionary life is a paradox. How else do you explain Paul's language of, *"as sorrowful, yet always rejoicing; as poor, yet making many rich; as having nothing, yet possessing everything,"* (2 Corinthians 6:10) except as a paradox? Here are a few examples:

We are **sorrowful** that we said goodbye to faithful family and friends. Yet, we are **rejoicing** in that we get to share life in a new place with new friends and family.

We are **poor** in that we have left the many advantages that come with living in America, including certain protections under the law, a society founded on a Judeo-Christian worldview, and, of course, thousands of every day conveniences. We make many **rich** principally through the bounty of the gospel, and secondly through the abundant life the Lord promises those who follow Him (John 10:10).

We have **nothing** in that we typically have no claim on lands, vehicles, or houses we use in service to the Lord. We **possess everything** because we enjoy the freedom that comes from using the land, cars, and homes fully in service to the Lord. After all, we are all merely stewards of what the Lord entrusts to us.

The missionary life is, in a word, complicated. It's not pure joy nor is it unrelenting sorrow. Consider dropping a quick note to one of our missionaries just to ask a question about daily life. You'd be surprised just how different our routines can be. We always welcome personal communication so that you can have a better idea of how to pray and partner with us. We also welcome it because we are partners together, and we also want to know how we can pray for you!

Finally, remember that Fayette County is your mission field. We will be praying for your ministry there. May Grace Community Church always have a vision and passion for missions wherever people may be found.