

LEAVING HOME COMING HOME

Dumelang! (Greetings). Grace and peace from God our Father, and Jesus Christ our Lord, together with the Holy Spirit be with you.

In the past few months, several people have been asking me how I feel about leaving Memphis/USA and coming back to Botswana. Well, the question has made me think about what home is. My experiences in the past four years have reshaped my understanding of home. Home has become more about people than a place or country. People who challenge me to grow deeper in my faith, show me love, kindness, and hospitality. People who believe in me more than I believe in myself. Through friends, church families across the country and world, fellow students, professors, and staff, I experience the presence of God. Therefore, leaving Memphis/USA and coming to Botswana, I feel like I was leaving home coming home.

Arrival and Getting set up

The brethren in Botswana and South Africa welcomed me with love and hospitality. I was blessed to have great people of faith waiting for me at Johannesburg airport, South Africa. Dennis and Dollina Malepa were so kind to drive for about 5-6 hours from Gaborone, Botswana to Johannesburg to pick me up. Because of the number of bags I had (ten check-bags and two carry on), I could not use a domestic flight to fly from South Africa to Botswana. I was glad the Malepas came to my rescue.



From left to right: Machona Monyamane, Tebogo Ramatsui, and Dollina & Dennis Malepa picking me up at Johannesburg airport, South Africa.

The past two months have been busy; I had to do a lot of paperwork. When I came to Memphis/USA, I lost my wallet, which had my national identification card (ID), drivers' license, bank card, and other documents. Without some of these official documents, I was a foreigner. I had to re-apply for all the documents, and some of them took weeks before I could get them. I'm now officially a Motswana.

Botswana has changed a lot in the past years. Some of the changes are positive while others are challenges that need to be addressed. Corruption and unemployment seem to increase every year. Pray for the country and its leaders.

The Oodi congregation (the congregation I'm working with) has been so kind and gracious to me. The first two weeks when I arrived, I stayed with one of the families at the church before moving into the house, which the church found for me.



Oodi congregation



During the month of September, we had a Southern African leadership meeting in Gaborone. The purpose of the meeting was to talk about having a forum where church leaders could discuss theological issues. Church leaders from Botswana, South Africa, and Swaziland attended the meeting.

The month of September ended with our congregation conducting prayers for rain and HIV/AIDS at the Oodi clinic. September is the month of prayer. The government encourages all religious groups to pray for national issues.

Visiting Shakawe

During the first week of October, I went to see families and churches in Shakawe. Shakawe is in the northwest region of Botswana and Gaborone is in the southeast region. When traveling from Gaborone to Shakawe, you drive across the country. My drive was very long, dangerous, and frustrating. The road is so bad; it has many huge and deep potholes. It took about 15 hours to get to Shakawe, which included some unplanned stops, where I had to let cows, elephants, ostriches, and other animals get off the road.

On October 7th, we had a combined service where four of the five congregations in the Shakawe area attended. Out of these five congregations, only one is doing relatively well. This is the congregation that has leaders or men who are at least able to teach. The congregation at Samochima, which is about 10 miles from Shakawe, has less than five active members. Most of the members have gone to churches that promise healing (known as fire churches because of the way they do exorcism). Due to lack of resources such as transportation, congregations that are not too far from each are unable to worship together on a regular basis.



Above: Shakawe congregations during a combined service.

Left: Mr. George, his wife Setlthodi in the middle, & Motlhagodi are some of the few active members at Samochima congregation. George is 92 years old; he barely sees but his memory is still sharp.

Odd Things in a Body Lotion

I was among those were called to go and see what Gracious Kamberuka, one of our church members, found in her body lotion. Gracious found strange things that looked like charcoals and herbs in her body lotion. Like many Africans, if not all, she believed that someone was trying to bewitch her. She was so scared, and she cried a lot. We read some scriptures to her that assured her of God's protection and deliverance, then prayed for her. We took the body lotion and burned it. The following day, I went with Gracious to the stores and bought a new body lotion. We prayed together and over the body lotion. Thank God; Gracious has not found any odd thing in her body lotion since then. Keep Gracious in your prayers; she is writing her high school final examinations. Witchcraft is a reality here, and there is a lot of evil things happening in schools.



Last week, the ladies at our congregation hosted ladies retreat for congregations in the southern region of Botswana.

Picture on the right: Oodi women in their doeks & the picture on the left are some of the women who attended the retreat.





Also, last week, John Moeng gave his life to Christ (he got baptized). Keep him in your prayers as he learns to walk with the Lord.

Prayer Needs and Future Activities

We are grateful for your prayers; by them, we are able to stand in the will of God and share the gospel. Continue praying for us.

- There is an outbreak of diarrhea in Botswana and other Southern African countries. Many people including from our church and my family have been affected. There are death cases in some areas of the country. The causes of the diarrhea are not yet known; however, it is most likely caused by unclean water. We have to boil our drinking water. Pray for God's protection and healing.
- We have heat-waves this week and the coming weeks. Eighty-five percent of Botswana are farmers who depend on rainfall for all their farming activities. When there is no rain, there is a drought and poverty. Pray for rain.
- On December 2, we have a combined service for congregations in the southern region of Botswana.
- We have girls/young women's workshop on generational poverty on December 22 at Shakawe. Pray for the success of the workshop.
- On December 23-26th, we have a lectureship at Shakawe.
- My two nieces and nephew (8-12 years old) are going to live with me next year. Pray for their transition and also pray for me; I have no parental wisdom.
- Pray for God's wisdom, strength, and guidance in my ministry and life.

Thank you for your support and participation in the mission of God in Botswana and Southern Africa. May God bless and keep you. *Your servant, Ananias Moses*