

Liz and Sergio Vilela

Food, fighting, and fragrance

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www.bmsworldmission.org/lsvilela



Dear friends,

We are grateful to be sending you news from Beira, Mozambique. One of the best things about thankfulness is that the more you choose it, the easier it gets. The more you profess gratitude, the more you notice things to be grateful for. The thankfulness muscles respond to exercise!

Colossians 3:16: "Let the message of Christ dwell among you richly as you teach and admonish one another with all wisdom through psalms, hymns, and songs from the Spirit, singing to God with **gratitude** in your hearts."

Delivering food in Mozambique is always a challenge for us, as we cannot help everyone, and the most difficult thing is to make the selection of those who need it most, because our resource is limited. We aim to particularly support widows who have no one to help them, orphans, single mothers, families that have many dependents and unemployed people with no other income. We talked with the leaders of the Baptist churches, and the idea was to bless the brothers and sisters of the local Baptist churches and also people in the local community. We want the church to be a testimony of the grace and mercy of God in this very difficult moment, and with this small gesture the church could start a relationship and through this relationship share Christ for these people (see photo of food distribution).

Many came to us and thanked us, but there was a lady who came to me, bent down almost on her knees and with her hands made a gesture of thanks, saying "thank you, I didn't know what I was going to eat tomorrow! I was asking myself the question if I would have a choice of food to eat...". That woman had a gratitude in her eyes, a gratitude that is often lacking in us who most of us have more than we need. My prayer is that you and I can be grateful to God and thankful for the food we eat each day, Amen.



We are all doing well, though battling a few coughs and colds, no Covid-19 thankfully, although a few weeks ago Sergio did become quite unwell and he did a test but it came back negative and we gave thanks to God for that. We celebrated Easter at home with a few friends, as churches are closed, and we also praised the Lord and had a time of prayer on the beach as a family. We found 2 cameleons in our garden on Good Friday (see pic). Sergio accidentally trod on one as he didn't see it (great camouflauge!) but he carried on walking and survived! We are in preparation for our arrival in the UK on 25th April for Home Assignment, and ready to spend 11 days in a quarantine hotel, but looking forward to coming back for a new months.



Mozambique is one of the poorest countries in the world but it has one of the greatest natural resources in Africa. Cabo Delgado is a province in the North, where it has one of the highest poverty levels and illiteracy rates (see map). It is also one of the areas richest in natural gas, but unfortunately it has faced a cruel war over the last three years, with attacks on the population, making them flee. Many people have been displaced, living as refugees in the forest for 4 days and up to 7 days without water or any kind of food. It seems that there is little information about what has led to these attacks but knowing that most wars are generated because of the ambition/greed of some, which becomes the terror of many. There is a saying in Mozambique - 'in an elephant fight, it is the grass that suffers'. In this struggle of some people's ambition/greed, it's the local people that suffer. We are very far from the conflict and in no danger, but we want to ask our partner churches and friends to pray for peace in Mozambique, and for the government, as we believe that all authority is constituted by God. You can find more information on this website:

<https://www.bbc.com/news/world-africa-56441499>



Even though Church buildings are currently closed due to Covid-19 restrictions I, Liz, was able to celebrate Mozambican Women's Day on 7th April at the Pastor's house with 9 other women from the Church. Cooking on the charcoal outside started early, about 9:00am, and as each dish is cooked separately with just space for one pan, we ate our lunch of chicken, rice, beans and salad at 3pm.

I had prepared a short talk for the women on value and the Samaritan woman, but during our time together and listening to them, I felt the Holy Spirit guide me and remind me that my view of how women are treated in Mozambique is different to their own view of how they are treated, as I compare it to my own experience and culture. I can tell them how I believe they should be treated but that could cause them more difficulties at

home. What they need is to know that their worth isn't based on how others treat them or what others say about them, but on what God says about them, and to have the inner strength and confidence in themselves to deal with whatever they have to deal with. I finished the talk by giving them some drops of sweet smelling oil to rub on their hands as a symbol that they are the aroma of Christ, valued and precious, and that they are able to emit the sweet smelling aroma of Jesus to others around them even in the adversities that they face (see picture of Liz at the meeting).



Please pray for:

- our health and preparations for travel on home assignment
- peace and resolution in the north of Mozambique, and protection for those in the midst of it all
- for strength and courage for the women at our Church, that they can really accept themselves and know their worth in the eyes of God, and be the aroma of Christ in their home and community

Thank you so much for your investment in the lives of those that we walk alongside, through prayer, finances, and other support for us. We really appreciate it. As they say in Portuguese 'estamos juntos na obra!!' (we are together in the work, meaning God's work).

God bless, Sergio, Liz, Chloe & Joshua

If you would like to support Liz and Sergio Vilela by prayer and committed regular giving, visit bmsworldmission.org/partners or call 01235 517617 for a 24:7 Partners leaflet.

