

Joint Evangelism Outreach to congregations in the Nampula and Zambézia Provinces, Mozambique – August 2022



Photo: Rev Danie Murray

Report by:

Johnny Beumer, Reformed Church Pretoria-Annlin, South Africa

Date: August 2022

1. Introduction

The Reformed Church of Pretoria-Annlin (hereafter RCPA) is one of the churches in South Africa that supports the Reformed Church in Mozambique (Igreja Reformada em Moçambique – hereafter IRM). Since 2011 RCPA were part of outreach groups or sent groups themselves to the North-eastern part of Mozambique to assist the IRM with various aspects of their church life. Christians are sparsely spread in the four North-eastern provinces of Mozambique despite the high population (approximately 15 million people) in this area.

Rev Danie Murray of Handevat regularly goes to North-east Mozambique with his vehicle and an opportunity arose to ride with him in August/September 2022 and RCPA grabbed this opportunity and sent their missionaries with Rev Murray for their 2022 outreach.

The Tumbine Synod of the IRM, who are based in Milange in the Zambezia Province, advised RCPA that they would like them to visit four congregations, i.e. Gilé in Zambezia Province and Nampula, Nacala and Ribaué in Nampula Province. The objectives of the visits were to encourage these four congregations and to teach them how to be true disciples of Jesus Christ and how to spread the gospel in order to make other disciples.

2. The Outreach Team

The outreach team comprised five members – four from South Africa and one from Mozambique. Rev Danie Murray drove all the way up with his vehicle from Cape Town. He picked up brothers Neels Slump and Johnny Beumer of RCPA and sister Alieske van't Foort of the Reformed Church Die Kandelaar in Pretoria. They travelled with Rev Murray's vehicle to Milange and from there the Secretary of Tumbine Synod, Pastor João Herbath accompanied them to the four mentioned congregations. After completion of the visits, brothers Neels and Johnny were taken to Nampula airport to fly back to Johannesburg. The three remaining members then travelled to Mocuba from where Pastor João would return to Milange and Rev Danie and Alieske would start another outreach on behalf of Reformed Church Strand to Mocuba, Pebane, Lugela and Magodane congregations, all four in the Zambezia Province. Pastor Carlos Erbate would be the one of the Synod who would accompany them to these mentioned congregations.



Back from left to right: Neels Slump, Rev Danie Murray and Johnny Beumer.

Front: Sister Alieske van't Foort and Pastor João Herbath.

3. Outreach Objectives

The objectives of the outreach were discussed with the Moderamen of the Tumbine Synod prior to the visit via two Zoom meetings and the meeting on 16 August 2022 in Milange. The accepted objectives were:

- To discuss a number of issues with the Moderamen of the Tumbine Synod of which the most important item would be the sending out of two evangelists to an unreached area for one month.

- Visit four prayer houses, one each of the Gilé, Nampula, Nacala and Ribaué congregations. Determine what the issues in each congregation are and shape the teachings accordingly as led by the Holy Spirit.
- Where possible, work with the children by telling them Bible stories and let them colour in a picture from that story.
- Hand out book bibles, audio bibles and course material to the four congregations mentioned above.

4. Traveling

The trip from Pretoria to Milange took the team four days. By the time Rev Murray picked up Neels, Johnny and Alieske in Pretoria, he already spent two days on the road, travelling from Cape Town to Pretoria. The group departed from Pretoria on 12 August at 4.30am and first travelled to Maputo to pick up Bernadette's son, Isaac who wanted a lift to visit his mother in Mocuba. Isaac is studying for a medical doctor in Maputo. The team overnighted at the Bible School in Macia. The second night the group camped at Goody Villas camping site in Inhassoro. On the third day they travelled further and spent the night at Piet and Ria Van Zyl who live near the entrance of the Gorongosa Game Reserve. From the crossing over the Save River, the road was in a very bad state and travelling slowed down to approximately 35km/h. The last stretch to Milange was the longest and the road from the Van Zyls to the Zambesi River Bridge was also in a very bad state. The team left Isaac in Mocuba with his mother, Bernadette and after dining with her, they travelled further to Milange and arrived there at midnight.



5. Bernadette Jansen's love for albinos in Mocuba

Bernadette Jansen is a remarkable missionary woman, who lives in Mocuba and who started and is managing the Oziwelha Wa Jesu Crèche.

Bernadette took pity on the albinos living in Mocuba and she asked for donations of sunscreen lotion to protect the sensitive skins of these people from the sunlight. The supporters of the outreach team donated generously and the team had the opportunity to hand over all the

donated sunscreen lotion. Bernadette was delighted and all supporters who donated products are sincerely thanked for participating in this wonderful project.



Bernadette and the team showing all the donated sunscreen products



Two of the big group of albinos under Bernadette's care, very thankful for the products they received

6. Our meeting in Milange

On 16 August 2022 the team met with the Moderamen of the Tumbine Synod. Pastor Samuel Matunda chaired the meeting. The other members of the Moderamen were Pastors João Herbath, Carlos Erbate and A.S. Uarica. The following points were discussed:

6.1 Outreach to the four congregations

The Moderamen confirmed that the four congregations that they wanted us to visit are Gilé, Nampula, Nacala and Ribaué. They advised the team to determine the spiritual need of each congregation and shape the teachings accordingly. Pastor João Herbath was nominated to accompany the outreach team.

6.2 Missionaries to unreached areas

The Moderamen confirmed that they were happy with the amended Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) which describes the intentions of RCPA and Tumbine Synod as partners for sending out two evangelists to an unreached area. Both parties signed the MOU after the meeting.



Pastor João signing the MOU



Johnny Beumer and pastor Samuel Matunda shaking hands after signing by both parties

Two training sessions had been arranged for elders/pastors who were nominated as candidate missionaries, i.e. from 28 August to 2 September and from 9 – 14 October, both at Thezeze. Pastor João would do the training for the first session while Rev Johannes Aucamp of TOPIA would do the training in October.

The two missionaries (evangelists) will be selected in November and they will go to the selected unreached area by mid January 2023 and come back mid February 2023.

6.3 Attending graduation ceremonies

It was pointed out that RCPA had approved to support Pastor Jussa Passulane with the cost of attending the graduation ceremony. RCPA however feels uneasy with such requests as this is not strictly evangelism. A further request had been received for three more final year students who want to attend the graduation ceremony at the end of the year.

The Moderamen pointed out that they will understand if RCPA is not willing to pay for graduation togas or university fees w.r.t. graduation, but that transport to the university is a real problem and they asked to reconsider the support for transport.

6.4 Bibles and Heidelberg Catechism booklets

The team brought 20 audio bibles along (5 Portuguese, 8 Elomwe and 7 Emakhuwa) and 50 Portuguese and 50 Elomwe Heidelberg Catechism booklets. Another R4000 has been budgeted for book bibles which would be bought in Nampula. Pastor João Herbath would decide how each of these would be distributed in the four congregations to be visited.

The Moderamen requested that another 50 Portuguese and 50 Elomwe Heidelberg Catechism booklets be sent with Rev Johannes Aucamp when he comes in October.

Post meeting note: 25 Book Bibles were bought in Nampula, i.e. 8 Portuguese, 7 Elomwe and 10 Emakhuwa.

6.5 Survival subsidies for pastors

Some survival subsidies have been paid out for more than 10 years and it seems that congregations find it difficult to become independent. It also concerns RCPA that some pastors spent a lot of time on farming and the question arose whether the survival subsidies are still required when the pastor's farming activities provides enough income to take care of his family. The subsidy was supposed to be an emergency measure.

The Moderamen pointed out that all pastors do a bit of farming (like Paul's tent maker ministry in the Bible) and that they cannot survive without. The R500/month subsidy is simply not enough for the pastor and his family to survive. It was agreed that some pastors will need the survival subsidy more than others but the Synod would not like to make the decision on which are deserving cases and which are not.

The Moderamen pointed out that the RCPA must feel free to terminate some pastor's subsidies if they feel that their situations are no longer deserving.



*Back from left to right: Neels Slump, Rev Danie Murray, Pastor Carlos Erbate
Front from left to right: Alieske van't Foort, Pastors João Herbath, Samuel Matunda, A.S. Uarica and Johnny Beumer*

7. Visiting the four congregations of the IRM

After the meeting in Milange the outreach team travelled to Mocuba where they spent the night. The next day they started their journey to the four congregations.

They first went to the village Marrua which is part of the Gilé congregation. From Mocuba, this was a five-hour drive. After they spent some time with the congregation, they travelled further to Nampula. This was a seven-hour drive. The road from Nampula to Nacala is a good tar road and took the team only 3 hours. Lastly they visited a congregation near the village Namigonha in the Ribaué District. From Nampula this is a 2 ½ hour drive. The road from Nampula to Namigonha is also a good tar road.

After all four congregations had been visited, brothers Neels and Johnny were dropped off at the Nampula Airport and Rev Danie, Pastor João and Alieske travelled back to Mocuba. From there Rev Danie and Alieske would start another outreach on behalf of the Reformed Church Strand in South Africa. Pastor Carlos Erbate from the Synod would accompany them.



8. Interactions with congregations

8.1 Marrua prayer house – Gilé Congregation

The team was welcomed by the singing sisters of the congregation and they were led to Pastor Pilima's house where they put up camp.

It was disappointing to notice that the congregation had shrunk substantially. The prayer houses of Iyona and Malema closed down since the last visit. There is appreciation for the circumstances that gatherings were prohibited by the government due to the Covid 19 pandemic, however a lot of work lies ahead to bring back the members who have become luke-warm in their love towards the Lord.

The team tried to determine what the needs of the congregation were. One point of concern is the knowledge of the Bible and the members' ability to handle and understand the Bible. After some time spent on Joshua 24: 15 the congregation committed themselves that they will serve the Lord.

Specific attention was given to the congregation's relation with God and relations with their neighbours within and outside the congregation. The necessity to forgive was also emphasised.



The beautiful mountain visible from Marrua. In the foreground, people are doing their washing in the river.



Alieske giving her personal testimony on forgiveness. Rev Danie is translating from English to Portuguese and Pastor Pilima from Portuguese into Elomwe.

The team was encouraged by the enthusiasm of the remaining congregation members and the beautiful singing. It could also be sensed that Pastor Pilima and his congregation were encouraged by our visit.

One problem with this congregation is that Pastor Pilima moved from the Mulela Prayer house to Marrua approximately 2 years ago. He did that to give his children the opportunity to attend school in Marrua. However, his house is now situated at the far end of the congregation and the furthest prayer house (Malema which is the one that closed down recently) is approximately 100km away on a bad road. Pastor Pilima therefore goes very seldom to the furthest prayer houses. It would have been better if the pator lived in the Gilé village as that would have been more central.

The team would like to make the following recommendations for the congregation of Gilé:

- Congregation members who do not own a Bible should be assisted. The 7 Elomwe Bibles and 1 Portuguese Bible which was later bought for Gilé should be delivered to the congregation.
- More time should be spent on Bible Study.
- An expectation was created that the congregation members will tell other people of Gilé that are not members of the congregation of the greatness and love of God. The growth in spiritual maturity and in membership should be closely monitored.
- Better communication with Pastor Pilima should be established.
- Pastor Pilima should consider moving to a more central point in the congregation.



Congregation divided into small Bible Study Groups

8.2 Nampula congregation



Our tents in the church building of Nampula



Teaching the members of Nampula congregation

The team headed for Nampula and arrived at the church in the evening. We put up our tents in the church.

The next morning the team went to Nampula business centre to buy 25 Bibles from the Bible Society Moçambique. The following Bibles were bought:

- 1 Portuguese and 7 Elomwe Bibles for Gilé.
- 3 Emakhuwa and 3 Portuguese Bibles for Nampula.
- 4 Portuguese Bibles for Nacala
- 7 Emakhuwa Bibles for Ribaué.

The Nampula congregation shrank substantially. According to Pastor Samuel, many members joined the church to see what they can get from her. When this did not materialise, they left the church again.

We started teaching in the afternoon of 19 August and only 3 women and 3 men attended the teaching. We decided to speak about what it means to be a lively member of the church and how to live in close relation with God and what it takes to be a true disciple of Jesus.

On the next day we prayed for each of the 6 congregation members before leaving for Nacala. We decided to spend more time in Nampula on the last day after returning from Ribaué.

The team made the following observations which need attention in future:

- Reduced numbers in membership – The remaining members ought to reach out to people and show them the love of Jesus.
- Since Pastor Samuel also serves the congregations of Nacala and Ribaué, some form of support i.t.o. travelling to these places must be sought.



*Pastor Samuel Pedro and his wife
Tokozane*



Pastor Samuel and his family

On the day before Neels and Johnny had to be dropped at the airport, the team paid a visit to Daniel and Angelina who live near the church of Nampula. Angelina is a truthful member of the church and assisted Tokozane Pedro with serving the outreach team. Her husband, Daniel collapsed 6 years ago and has been paralysed in the lower body ever since. Every day Angelina picks leaves (e.g. sweet potato leaves) and sells it at the market. This is however not enough for the couple to survive. Apart from being paralysed, Daniel also has problems with his lungs. He doesn't use any medication since the couple can't afford this.

The team felt very sorry for the couple and prayed for them. Pastor Samuel was given 2000mt and was asked to buy a bag of maize for the couple and some medication at the clinic for Daniel's lung problem.

It was sad to hear that only Angelina is a member of the church and that Daniel hasn't as yet have a relation with the Lord. We hope, with this small deed of love, that Daniel will recognise the love of Jesus for him and that he will give his heart to Jesus.

The following observations were made which needs urgent attention from the local pastor:

- It is sad that no attention was given in the past to Daniel by the congregation members. It is recommended that pastor Samuel work with this man so that he himself can discover God's will through the Discovery Bible Study method.
- Since Angelina is illiterate, Pastor Samuel decided to give one of the donated audio bibles to her.



Angelina and her husband Daniel



Angelina very thankful with the bag of maize she received

8.3 Nacala congregation

On Saturday 20 August the team arrived in Nacala. That Saturday afternoon we talked until dark and the congregation members told the team about their struggle. They acquired a piece of land and build a structure of poles and roof for their church services. Much of the funds for the structure came out of brother Paulo Mocandere's pocket. A cyclone however destroyed the structure shortly afterwards. Then the members rebuild the structure, but this time with blocks. Then the second cyclone came and also destroyed this structure. The two events discouraged the congregation to a large extent. They then erected a shade roof for their gatherings in the yard of a house which two students are currently renting. The congregation is afraid that they will have to find another place of worship when the students go back to Mannila and terminate the renting.

It was acknowledged that the congregation had a hard time with two consecutive setbacks. The sound leadership of brother Paulo however kept the congregation together. The outreach team however felt that the place of worship and the desire to

acquire a permanent structure was being over-emphasised and should not be the starting point of a successful congregation. The current roof structure is quite sufficient and the congregation should rather investigate if they cannot themselves take over the renting of the house when the students have to leave. The current renting fee is 1500mt per month.



The structure that was destroyed by the first cyclone



The current structure in the backyard of the house which the students are currently renting.

On Sunday morning 21 August the outreach team had the privilege to attend the church service with the Nacala congregation. Rev Danie Murray preached and emphasised the importance to have a relation with God and people inside and outside the church. The enthusiasm of and lively singing by the congregation members were contagious. The happiness that radiated from the congregation members left a warm feeling with everyone.

In the afternoon further teachings followed. The two topics, namely Christianity vs true discipleship and seed actions generated a lively discussion.

The following observations and recommendations need to be documented:

- The enthusiasm of the congregation is encouraging and the perseverance of brother Paulo as leader of the group, despite difficult circumstances, is admired. The congregation can build further on this.
- A relation needs to be built with the surrounding community. The congregation need to show the love of Jesus to the outside environment. They have to practice seed actions where small deeds of love are shared with other.
- It was wonderful to see young people who have the courage to take the lead. Most of them are students but this forms an important core group of the congregation.

- When the students leave and the lease of the house is terminated, the congregation must do its utmost best to take over the leasing contract. It is recommended that the congregation is helped on a meticaïs for meticaïs basis. E.g. if the lease is 2000mt per month the congregation themselves can contribute 1000mt and they will then be helped with the other 1000mt.



Nacala brothers singing



The team's tents in the backyard of the rented house

8.4 Prayer house in Ribaué district

On 22 August the team drove to the next prayer house in the Ribaué District. At the village Namigonha, they turned left from the tar road and followed the dirt road for approximately 10 km to the recently erected prayer house.

After putting up camp, the team addressed the congregation by asking the question why they come to church. It was immediately clear that this is a very new group and that some members haven't had an opportunity to learn who God is and how to have a relation with Him. Pastor Samuel himself said "here we have to teach from zero" meaning the team had to start with the basics. Almost no congregation member was in possession of a Bible, something that also needed attention.

.The next day's programme was disrupted by a funeral. All the people of the area attended and the congregation members also had to attend. Pastors João and Samuel showed their respect by also attending. According to Pastor João, quite a few people approached him asking questions about the church.



The newly erected prayer house in the Ribaué District



The creation story heard by the congregation for the first time

In the afternoon, after the funeral, the team continued their teaching. In view of the funeral which was held that morning, the team asked whether a Christian should be afraid to die. The need to forgive each other and the need to be trustworthy was then explained w.r.t. Matthew 18.

The next morning history of how and when God created everything was told and many people heard this for the first time. In order to illustrate the love of God and the need to forgive, the parable of the lost son was told by means of role play.

The team observed the following and make the following recommendations:

- Overall there is a lack of knowledge and relation with God and Biblical relation with people. Pastor Samuel will have to come here regularly for teaching the congregation.
- The lack of Bibles had been addressed by Pastor Samuel. Illiterate members could be helped with the donated audio Bibles and Pastor Samuel issued quite a number of Gideon New Testaments in Portuguese and the 7 complete Emakhuwa Bibles.

9. Outreach Conclusions and Way Forward

9.1 Missionaries to unreached areas: Both partners look forward to co-operate on taking the gospel to unreached areas. The first training (29 August to 2 September 2022) will be done by Pastor João Herbath and the second training (9 – 14 October 2022) will be done by Rev Johannes Aucamp of Topia. The two evangelists will be selected in November and the evangelists will DV go out from mid January to mid February.

- 9.2 Survival subsidies to pastors:** It remains a concern that the survival subsidies for pastors are not being phased out. Some pastors have received their survival subsidies for more than a decade. The subsidies were granted in difficult times (during drought or after a flood) but in good times the congregations should take care of their pastors by way of tithes of the members. If not with money, then with products. Donors will in future evaluate the situation and terminate or rechannel their donation for more deserving projects.
- 9.3 Declining membership in congregations:** It was sad to notice a decline in members at almost all congregations. Some prayer houses closed down completely. The Covid 19 pandemic and the Government's prohibition on public gatherings played significant role in this trend. A lot of focus was placed on building relations during the outreach. Building relations firstly with God and then also with the neighbour. The members were encouraged to show the love of Jesus to people within the congregation but also to people outside. By offering small deeds of love, an opportunity can be created for sharing the greatness of God through e.g. discovery bible study. We must pray that, over time, the church will start growing again.
- 9.4 Availability of Bibles:** The outreach team donated 25 book Bibles and 20 audio Bibles. In general, very few members own a Bible. Some members who received Bibles in the past, left the church with the result that there is an overall shortage in each congregation. The donated Bibles were divided by Pastor Herbath for the four congregations and then left to the local pastor to decide who should get one. Pastor Herbath was of opinion that the Bible must first be provided on loan (like a library does) and only when the member is ready for confirmation, can the Bible be issued on a permanent basis. Such decision is left for the local pastor.
- 9.5 Bible studies needed:** It was noticed that the Bible is being used very little by a number of members. They lack in knowledge. The members were encouraged to do more Bible study. For example the Discovery Bible Study (DBS) methodology is an excellent way to do Bible study in groups. Laminated DBS cards were issued to all four congregations. Only the Gilé congregation was shown how to use the cards as Pastor Samuel who ministers the three remaining congregations knows the methodology very well. He undertook to teach his congregations himself.

- 9.6 Transport for Pastor Samuel:** Pastor Samuel Pedro covers a huge area and it is necessary for him to travel to Nacala and Namigonha at least once a month. Minibus taxi fares for a round trip to Nacala is 1000mt and to Namigonha 800mt. Pastor Samuel will sometimes take his wife Tokozane with him and then leave the children at Daniel's (see Par 8.2) daughter Isabella. This is encouraged as Tokozane herself is a very loveable person. For Pastor Samuel himself, the cost will be 21 600mt per year. If Tokozane accompanies him four times a year (every quarter) then the cost would be 28 800mt per year. With a current exchange rate of R1=3,75mt this equals ZAR 7 696 per year. It is recommended that RCPA consider budgeting R10 000 for the next year for this purpose and that the difference, i.e. R2 304 is used for buying a bicycle for the pastor which he can store at the house of brother Namutapa who lives in Namigonha. He can then use the bicycle to travel from Namigonha to the prayer house.
- 9.7 Prayer house at Nacala:** The Nacala members erected a shade roof in the back yard of two student members Chinsomo and Americo. Two structures had been destroyed by cyclones. The congregation fear that they will have to move again when the two students terminate the renting of the house. The rent currently amounts to 1500mt per month. It is important that the congregation will try taking over the renting of the house so that they can continue using the shaded roof as their prayer house for the time being. Since the congregation already spent a lot of money on the prayer house twice which was at both times destroyed by the cyclone, it is recommended that RCPA helps with the rent on a meticaïs for meticaïs basis. E.g. should the rent go up to 2000mt per month, RCPA can consider helping them with 1000mt per month. The amount that need to be considered by RCPA is then in the order of R3200 per year.
- 9.8 Future outreach travelling:** The outreach team occasionally remarked that they wish they could spend more time with each congregation. The travelling time from Pretoria to Nampula is five days. By car 10 days will already be lost for the round trip. It is recommended that two persons fly from Pretoria to Nampula and that a Synod pastor, who can translate from English to Portuguese, be chosen as team member. He will then be compensated to travel by bus or minibus taxi to Nampula. The team can then rent a vehicle to drive them to Gilé, Nacala and Ribaué. This may cost slightly more but more time can then be spent with the congregations. RCPA should consider this since Pastor Danie Murray and his vehicle will not always be available for them. (E.g. Pastor Danie could possibly accompany another group in the July school holiday which could be the only time RCPA can send missionaries).

10. Acknowledgements

We thank God above all, who made this outreach possible, let the members of the team travel safely and blessed the work that was done.

We also say thank you to:

- All the prayers which went up to the Lord for the outreach team.
- Rev Giepie van der Merwe for presiding when the congregation of RCPA sent brothers Neels and Johnny and sister Alieske out. (and also Rev Danie in his absence).
- The Moderamen of the Synod, Pastors Matunda, Herbath, Erbate and Uarica who made their time available to meet with the team in Milange.
- Sister Nagel and Rev Gesse Rios of Grace Reformed Church Northern Pretoria who assisted with translating the memorandum of understanding into Portuguese.
- All the love received from the people at the prayer houses. The food provided.
- Pastor Samuel Pedro and his wife Tokozane for taking care of the team while in Nampula.
- The Tumbine Synod for their cooperation and making Pastor Herbath available to be part of the outreach team.
- Our translator from English to Portuguese, Rev Danie Murray, and the local translators who translated from Portuguese into Elomwe and Emakhuwa.
- Rev Danie Murray for his valuable advice and contributions. Also thanks to Rev Danie for the use of his vehicle.
- RCPA Evangelism Commission in South Africa who provided funding for the outreach as well as the Bibles.
- The Reformed Church Die Kandelaar for their financial contribution towards this outreach.
- Sister Alkieske van't Foort who kept a huge support group in South Africa informed on a daily basis during the outreach.
- An anonymous donor who also contributed financially towards this outreach.
- Sister Cobie Plomp who kept the congregation of RCPA informed through their newsletters and Facebook.
- Sister Anita Rudman who had to deal with the finances.
- All the people who reacted on the plea to donate sunscreen lotion for the albinos under Bernadette's care.