



# Joyful Worship

*Elizabeth Long in Diwa*

*Tom McDow in Mpulu*

Today our team split 3 ways to worship in the villages. Diwa is a 3-hour drive from Zobue city into the rural area. Each time I have come to Tete Province and worshiped with the villagers, I have come away feeling so spirit-filled. Today was no exception. Who would have thought that I could sit on a foot-high concrete bench for 2 1/2 hours and never feel tired?! It was the exuberance of the people and the love and encouragement we shared that made the time pass so quickly.

When we come here, our African brothers and sisters show us again and again that our lives are dependent upon God...that everything we have is a gift from God and that we should realize our own prosperity is so fleeting. Berry's sermon text is so true ... we need to lay up our treasures in Heaven, not here on Earth. As we stood in front of the congregation, about 20 different members processed down the aisle singing and dancing and bearing gifts for us: bananas, sugar cane, a chicken, a 50-pound sack of potatoes, corn, more bananas, more sugar cane, more of everything and a banner and cross that they had made. How humbling! How self-sacrificing! These people do not know if their crops will last to the next harvest, and yet they share so graciously what they have. It always makes me



feel bad to see them give up some of their precious food supply, but it gives them such joy to share with us. We could never refuse these gifts from their hearts!

The next time we have visitors in our church, wouldn't it be wonderful if we processed down the aisle singing and dancing and bearing our most precious things as gifts?! What would you bring?

Our worship group drove to the village of Mpulu. This small Presbyterian congregation welcomed us with song and dance as they joyously led us into their sanctuary for worship. After an opening prayer and six hymns sung in rich harmony, the liturgy began, followed by the offering, which was quite touching. Instead of passing the plate, each person took turns dancing up to place their gift in the basket. The last person to come up was the eldest women in the congregation who generously put in a small coin.

A f t e r multiple songs by different choirs, Tom Boone preached an encouraging message of hope and of God's faithfulness, based on Isaiah 40:28-31. As I



listened to the sermon and watched the congregation's attentiveness, I found myself reflecting on the John 17 where Jesus emphasized "We are all one in Christ." Tom then moved to 2 Cor 4:7-11, in which Paul states that just because we are Christians does not mean life will be easy. Tom went on to say, "if life were easy, we would be tempted to feel we don't need God's strength." Our mission co-worker and public health nurse in Tete Province, Sebber Banda, mentioned that it was very helpful for the people to hear this kind of message from an outside preacher (abusa).

I first worshiped with this congregation in 2009 on my first visit to Tete Province. It was gratifying for me to bring greetings from Westminster Presbyterian and The Outreach Foundation. The congregation expressed gratitude for our visit and asked for our prayers and promised to pray for us as well.

I have concluded that our brothers and sisters in Mozambique are happy, joyous, generous, and unhurried people, who value relationships. Indeed, we have much to learn from our African brothers and sisters in Christ.

Pastor Carlos, pastor of 30+ churches, in Tete Province invited us to eat with him for two dinners and two breakfasts while we stayed in Zobue. He receives no salary. As thanks we gave the food gifts to him, which we received from these churches.