



Botswana Bulletin – Thirty Eighth Edition

“I’ll miss you Botswana”

May 21, 2009

Greetings from an increasingly colder Gaborone, Botswana! Yes, it’s coming around to my favourite time of year here in Botswana...winter! Honestly, winter is the best time of year. The weather doesn’t get too hot (maybe 20-25°C by midday) and the temperatures drop quite dramatically at night (between 0°C-5°C). I always sleep better in the winter. In the summer when night time temperatures can still be above 30°C, it can get pretty uncomfortable. For the lucky ones with air conditioning (like me) sleeping at night is a little easier, but nothing beats the naturally cooler weather. Perhaps the reason I like it is because it’s just nice to have a change in weather. It is hot here so often that when the cool air comes it’s just nice to feel something else besides the blistering sun. As nice as winter is you have to enjoy it while you can. Winter weather only sticks around for 2-3 months and then it starts heating up again. I’m glad my last days here will be spent during the winter months. Perhaps my flight home won’t be delayed by a thunderstorm this time. ☺

Many have been asking about my departure dates and exactly when I’ll be where. I haven’t sorted my summer out quite yet but I now have a confirmed arrival date in Edmonton. First, I’ll give the rundown of how I’ll get to Edmonton. As I mentioned in my last letter I will be leaving Gaborone, Botswana on June 25th. I will arrive in London, England the next day and spend a little over a week with some friends there. On July 6th I’ll fly from London to Toronto and spend a few days at the SIM Canada head office. On July 9th I fly from Toronto to Edmonton and am do to arrive at 8:43pm. There have been some who have expressed interest in meeting me at the airport. If you’re interested and able I’ll be flying with Air Canada on flight AC1161 scheduled to depart Toronto @ 6:25pm. If you do meet me at the airport there is one condition, you must bring either a slurpee or Tim Horton’s Iced Cap for me. The more the merrier! ☺

A few people have asked me what I’ll miss most about Botswana. To me that’s an easy answer...the people! However, when I thought about it some more I wondered what things I’d be surprised that I’ll miss. Like for example, will I actually grow to miss the crazy driving? I’ll admit some of the things you see on the road make great conversation pieces. For example, just the other day a combi (local van taxi) cut me off and then stopped in front of me and waved at me asking for my approval. What?! How was I supposed to react. “Sure. Go ahead and cut me off combi driver, oh, and by the way, I appreciate that you

asked for permission after the fact.” I just ignored him. I was annoyed at the time but when I look back it was actually pretty funny. The other thing about the driving here is learning the “code” of the road. Driving on Botswana roads is a lot different than it is in the west. Hazard lights and high beams are used for all sorts of things that they aren’t used for in the west. A common thing to do if someone is pulling over to allow you to pass on the highway is to flash your hazard lights as a “thank you” once you’ve completed the pass. I’ve had people flash their high beams at me in the middle of the day which apparently was supposed to mean “you can go”. So if you’re driving in Canada and someone starts flashing their high beams at you in the middle of the day, don’t worry, it’s just me. ☺

One thing I know I will definitely miss is the tuck shops. This is something that simply won’t be able to be replaced back home. For those who don’t know, I typically go “hunting” for lunch during the week days and I’ve always enjoyed going to local tuck shops (or a “Semausu” in Setswana) to purchase food from the local people. Two of my favourite tuck shops have been “Lady M’s” and, well, I’m not entirely sure what the other tuck shop is called. I usually call it “Segametsi’s” cause that is the name of the lady who owns it. Lady M’s is owned by a lady named Boitumelo. Our Initial Ministry Coordinator, Tina Kort, who has been a missionary in Botswana for nearly 30 years, is an old friend of Boitumelo and it’s because of Tina that I found this gem of a tuck shop. My favourite thing to buy from Boitumelo is “Koko le reisi. Ke rata sehuba!” (Chicken and rice. I like the breast!) I haven’t been able to get food from Boitumelo in a while though. Her tuck shop is located in front of a furniture store and she was asked to move. She ended up moving across the street but has since moved again. I’m not sure where she is now. The government is being to introduce new rules which make tuck shops more difficult to run. In the meantime I’ll just have to enjoy my chicken and rice while I can.

Chicken and rice is usually what I order from the tuck shops but you can get different varieties of traditional food as well which I sometimes have. Some of the traditional food, like “Madombi” (a large dumpling, kinda like a cinnamon bun without the cinnamon) is very filling so I’ll only get that if I’m extra hungry. I find the best part about the tuck shops is the “meet and greet” style that each tuck shop has. I’ve always enjoyed heading out to the shops to practice my Setswana. There is never an abundance of white people at the tuck shops so I think locals enjoy it when one comes out, especially if you can order in Setswana. Yep, I’ll definitely miss the tuck shops when I’m back in Canada. Anyway, I guess that’s enough about food for now. There were a few big events during the last two events so let me get back on track and tell you about them.

Flying Mission recently acquired a new plane, a King Air 200 and we had a dedication ceremony for the plane in mid April. We also had another ambulance dedicated to us by the Rotary club so we now have 2 ambulances, one in Francistown the other in Gaborone. So growth has definitely been happening in our aviation program. Praise the Lord!

Shortly after the dedication I was able to make a trip up to Zambia to say farewell to some of my friends up there. It was great to reconnect with people that I haven’t seen in such a long time. I was even able to play on a worship team together with my manager, Richard Wheatley. We used to play together on the worship team at OBC G-West as well as in the band we were both a part of “Audience of One”. So it was great being able to play together one last time before I head off. I was able to visit SIM Zambia while I was in Lusaka as well. A former Flying Mission co-worker, Diane Vos, is now working for SIM in Zambia so I went to visit her and she showed me a bunch of the work SIM is doing there which was great. I was only

planning to be in Lusaka for just over a week but plans changed when I attempted to leave Lusaka on a bus. A task easier said than done. ☺

The plan to get me home was as follows. I needed to take a bus from Lusaka to a small village called Choma. In Choma I was supposed to meet a man who would drive me from Choma to Macha. I would stay overnight in Macha and in the morning a Flying Mission plane would arrive that was heading to Gaborone. I know it sounds like a big hassle but its alot better than sitting on a bus for 24 hours, which is what I did to get to Lusaka from Gaborone. So, on Monday morning I got up mice and early and headed to the Lusaka inner city bus station to catch the bus to Choma. A local friend, Eddy, drove me to the bus station and helped me find the right bus to get on. I bought a ticket and they said that the bus would be leaving by 7:30am. It was currently 6:30am so I only had 1 hour to wait which didn't seem that bad. So, onto the bus I went to wait. Well as expected 7:30am came and went. No problem, things usually run late in Zambia anyway. Well 8:30 came, then 9:30, then 10:30. The bus was still at the station! Ok, this seemed kinda strange. So I went to the guy who boarded me on the bus and I asked him what the hold-up was. Well it turns out the bus doesn't actually leave until it's full. Great. So I asked the obvious question. "When do you think the bus will fill up?" "Only God knows", was his answer. Indeed.

At this point I'm starting to get a little concerned. I'm supposed to be meeting a guy in Choma at 2:00pm to drive me from Choma to Macha. At the rate things were going I thought I may need a backup plan in case I don't make it on time. I text messaged the people I know in Macha and they suggested 2 things. One suggested I take a cab from Lusaka to Choma. This was going to be expensive. It's like a 4 hour drive! I didn't really want to do that. The other option was that if I got into Choma late I could take a cab from Choma to Macha. This seemed like a good idea but I thought my chances of catching a taxi would go down the later it got. So I made a decision. I'll wait until 12:30pm. If the bus still hasn't left, I'll call the trip off and sort out another way home. Well, 12:30pm came and the bus still hadn't moved. I had now been on a bus for 6 hours that hadn't gone anywhere! I think my patience has increased since moving to Botswana! ☺ I called Richard and told him what had happened. He said he would be able to pick me up on his way to the FMZ office. So I collected my luggage and went to return my ticket at the office to get my money back. Well, it turns out that was more difficult than I expected.

I went to the ticket office and explained why I had to cancel my trip and asked if I could get my money back. The guy behind the counter said that they don't give any refunds for cancellations. That seemed strange. I looked at the back of the ticket and it explained that if you cancelled your ticket you were subject to "a small fee". When I pointed this out to the guy he still said that they don't do that. I was beginning to believe that this guy was trying to cheat me. After 6 hours of waiting on "the bus to nowhere" my patience had pretty much worn out. I got angry and called the man a liar and for that I was pretty much ignored. Richard was coming for me so I didn't have time to argue further. I told him I would be back later with the police.

After returning to the FM compound and looking at all the stunned people who had expected me to be in Botswana, I explained what had happened. Everyone believed that I was entitled to some money and if this man wouldn't give it to me that I should get the police involved. So I decided to do just that.

The next day Eddy and I were back at the bus station. Eddy's recommendation was to talk to the police before we approached the ticket office. As it turns out, there was a police station right at the bus station. So, off we went. When we got to the police station there were 2 police woman so we explained to them what had happened. They both agreed that this man was wrong and owed me money. They decided that this is what should be done. "Go to the ticket office, find the man who owes you money, and bring him back here." Are you kidding? Ok, I decided I would clarify exactly what it is that she was saying. I said, "Let me get this straight. Are you giving me the authority to bring this guy in to the Police? What if he doesn't want to come? Do I have the authority to force him? You may want to give me a badge and a club." Well, they ended up changing their minds. They decided they would give me a "call out" instead. In plain English I would call this a "summons". Basically it was a letter from the police to this man requesting his presence at the Police station. Apparently if he refused this they could get in big trouble. It was like admitting you were guilty. So off I went with the letter to the ticket office. I didn't recognize any of the men behind the ticket office this time so I explained what happened the day before, laid the letter down on the counter and said that one of them would now have to join me at the police station. Well none of them wanted anything to do with me at this point. They didn't want any trouble, "We just work here" was there reply. It was decided that I needed to talk to the "big boss". As it turned out the big boss was on his way so we waited for him to arrive.

The big boss arrived before long so I once again explained what had happened. The big boss went on to tell me that I didn't understand how the buses ran in Zambia and that the bus doesn't run on a schedule. I explained to him that this is something that should have been told to me before I bought a ticket. I also pointed out to him what his ticket said on the back and he did end up coming over to my side. He said that due to my "specific circumstance" he was willing to depart with some of his money and pay me back 40,000 Kwacha (about \$10 Canadian). The bus ticket only cost about \$20 Canadian so it wasn't a whole lot of money I was fighting for. To tell you the truth, the money didn't matter to me. I just thought it might be fun to try and get it back! ☺ I wasn't disappointed. So the big boss offered me the K40,000 and I figured that wasn't a bad deal so I asked him what he needed. He said he would need all my papers (receipts, the callout, etc) he would go over to his main office and come back with the money. I was about to hand him over all my papers when Eddy stopped me. He thought that the man may run off with all of my papers and never return. Without the papers I have no proof that I purchased a ticket. I agreed with Eddy. Well, this didn't make the big boss very happy. He accused Eddy of calling him a thief! Then Eddy and the big boss started to argue in Nyanja (the local language in Lusaka). Eventually Eddy turned to me and said that we should go to the police station to sort this out. That is why we were given a call out in the first place. The big boss then turned to me and warned that if we did go to the police that I wouldn't get my money, that they would laugh at me, and other such things. Frankly, I didn't believe that. The police seemed to be on my side, they already gave me a call out. I figured we would go test his theory. So, off we went back to the police station. I could see why the big boss didn't want to go to the police station. When we walked in the police woman I had spoken to earlier recognized him and began shouting at him in Nyanja. Eddy translated the argument for me and said that the police woman had heard that he only wanted to give me K40,000 and they were arguing that I should be getting back more! At one point the big boss got mad at the ladies and started to yell at them. From what I understand that is a great offense in Zambian culture. When this happened a policeman appeared from an office at the back of the station. He went up to the big boss and started to argue with him. He then grabbed the big boss and forcibly caused him to sit down on a nearby bench. Apparently the officer wanted this guy to calm down, and boy did it work. Once the room quieted down I decided it was my turn to speak. I explained to the police woman that I was happy with the K40,000 and that we didn't need to argue about that any further. The big boss told me to just give him my papers and he would get me the money. This is where I decided to test something I had heard about Zambians.

I had been told that in Zambian culture relationships meant more than paperwork. If you want to really get something done all the paperwork in the world wouldn't beat a personal relationship. It's not what you

know, it's who you know. I thought this would be a good test for that. I had built a relationship with these police woman. They knew who I was and they knew who had cheated me. If I gave up these papers now it shouldn't matter since the relationship is now there. So that's what I did. I gave up my papers to the big boss and said to him "I trust you." At that we headed back to the ticket office.

When we got to the ticket office the big boss asked me to wait at the ticket office and he would be back shortly with my money. So off he went. At this point it appeared the big boss was now ignoring us. He was off doing everything but getting me my money. At one point he walked past us with some money and was getting change from the guy behind the counter. Eddy asked him where my money was. "It's coming! This isn't yours! Be patient!" So we waited. Finally, the big boss walked towards me and handed me K40,000 and said to me, "The game is over." Indeed, and we had won. ☺ I didn't actually say that but I wanted to. One thing I have learned in Africa is that you need to "save face". For those who don't know what that means it basically means that you shouldn't humiliate someone even if they have done a great wrong. So I thanked the manager for the money and told him he made a good business decision. He in turn told me that I was right to go to the police. It was an honourable finish. However, after the big boss had spoken to me, he looked at Eddy and said something to him in Nyanja. I didn't know what he said, but the way he said it I could tell it was something bad. Eddy handled it well and didn't retaliate. Once we had walked away I asked Eddy what the big boss said to him. He said it was difficult to translate into English but it was something like, "Why are you helping the driver when he forces you to sit in the trunk?" The big boss had thought that Eddy was my worker and the only reason he was helping me was to save his job. I wish I had known that earlier. I would have given the money to Eddy in front of the big bosses face. That would have changed his view of things I'm sure. I did end up giving half the money to Eddy anyway. He had endured some hardship to help me so I felt it was the least I could do.

When I got back from Zambia Flying Mission held its AGM (Annual General Meeting). This was a big deal this year because we were going to vote on our new CEO candidate. John and Yvonne Lubbe are planning to leave there position as CEO to Flying Mission so we had setup a search committee to find suitable replacements and those replacements were to be introduced at the AGM. After much talk and deliberation it was decided that the candidates, Mike and JoAnne Webb would be accepted as our new CEO. Please pray for them as they prepare to come at what I hear will be the end of August.

Another tidbit of news that I should have mentioned earlier is my school application status. As it turns out I didn't need an interview in the end and was accepted to the program without any issues. I am due to start classes on September 8th. However, I was told that I was lacking in one area of expertise, something called "Cisco training." The department head felt I should do some studying on that before I start in September so I've gone ahead and applied to an online course. This will enable me to study here in Botswana and at home before my classes start. Please pray that I'd find time to do this necessary studying to best prepare myself for my upcoming course.

With that said I think it's time I wrapped this letter up. Once again I'd like to leave you with some prayer requests so I've listed them below.

- 1) My mother – some of you have asked about her status. They have abandoned the idea of fixing the problem with her heart and feel transplant is the only solution. She sees a doctor on Friday

(May 22nd) who will decide if she is a candidate for a transplant. If this is denied there is nothing further that can be done. Please pray that the Lord would allow her to go on the transplant list.

- 2) 5 weeks left! – Pray that my last weeks here in Botswana would be good ones. Pray that I would end well both in my work, ministries and relationships.
- 3) Zambia trip – Praise that I had the chance to see my Zambian friends before I left.
- 4) Online Course – Pray that I would find time to master the information I need to know before classes start in September.
- 5) Accepted! – Praise that NAIT have accepted me into the IT Management program
- 6) King Air 200/Ambulance – Praise that FM was able to get a new plane and a new ambulance. Pray that both assets would be used to bring God glory.
- 7) The Webbs’ – Pray for our new CEO couple as say there good-bye’s (they are from Idaho) and prepare to come to Botswana in August.

Lastly, I would like to take this time to say thank you to all who have supported me during the last 5 years. It’s been quite the adventure! Speaking of support, most of you may know that I will continue to be an SIM missionary while I’m at school so if you feel led to continue to support me during my study leave that would be most appreciated. I will be covering my own school fees so the only my monthly living costs will need to be covered so I’ll make that information available to you once I know what my needs will be.

Thanks again to all of you for being so supportive during my time here in Botswana. I look forward to seeing most of you in person very soon!

Peace and prayers,

Graham “Rapula” Crawford <><

Current Contact Info:

Graham Crawford

PO Box 1022

Gaborone, Botswana

Africa

SIM Contact Info:

SIM Canada

10 Huntingdale Blvd.

Scarborough, ON

M1W 2S5

Cell phone: (267) 72654300

Canada

House Phone: (267) 3919213

Tel: 416-497-2424

E-mail: g Crawford@flyingmission.org

Fax: 416-497-2444

E-mail: info@sim.ca

For more info on SIM Canada visit: www.sim.ca

For more info on the Flying Mission visit: www.flyingmission.org

Please visit my picture gallery website at: www.flickr.com/photos/botswanabulletin