

\Mission Central Meyer Minute

Challenging indeed! But mission is also inspiring because we see the Holy Spirit at work in situations where only God can make a difference. The newest issue of "Missionsblatt," the magazine from the Bleckmar Mission Society in Germany, has a "Wow" report from Dr. Carlos Winterle, past coordinator between the Mission Society and the Lutheran church in Mozambique. Read his report as a participant in that saving work because Mission Central supports the work in Mozambique. And as you read, what jumps out to you?

"God's mission in Mozambique surprises us every day! In addition to the regular reports which we receive about the activities of the church administration of the Concordia Christian Church of Mozambique, reports about the congregations, ongoing projects, new congregations and construction, we now are amazed by actual statistics. In 2015 there were 10 congregations with some 1,000 members. In 2019 there were 80 congregations with about 8,000 members. The new statistics for 2021 point to about 120 congregations and 43,974 members, some 9,000 families! It is God, acting through His Word and the work of the Holy Spirit in the witness of each individual Christian in Mozambique, who gathers His people in worship services among trees under the sky, in huts and little chapels of mud and wood, and in walled churches. Despite difficulties because of the misery in which the land lives, and natural catastrophes that destroy its harvests and cause hunger, these people do not stop coming together to praise God, hear His Word, and pray.

"The leadership of the Church through lay people plays a very important role in this growth, for there are only a few ordained pastors. Not only students in theological education programs – future pastors, as they will be known – do their part, but also local elders in each new mission start gather people around the Word. Each new worship site receives Bibles, the Small Catechism, and the Bible readings and liturgy provided for each Sunday. Despite their limited knowledge because of a lack of education, what they hear from the elders is sufficient to rouse their faith in Jesus and to gather themselves in the name of the Triune God. We thank you all for your prayers and gifts for God's mission in Mozambique. God bless you all. Pastor Carolos Walter Winterle"

What jumped out at you? Certainly, the amazing grow of congregations. That it happens in a very poor land should give us much to ponder in our materially super-blessed country. Do we really "fear, love, and trust in God above all things" as Luther teaches us in the First Commandment of the Small Catechism? And shouldn't we reflect on the witness of laypeople in the growth of the Church? The Church is all of us, and each in our own way can "declare the praises of Him who called us out of darkness into His marvelous light" (1 Peter 2:9). Whether in Mozambique or your community, mission is challenging but always inspiring because it is God's mission through His Gospel we proclaim.