

## Mahon Home Dispatch #01 07.09.09 Hitting The Ground Running

### Pictures

**1\_ Hitting the ground running:** By the time El and collapsed into bed last night it was after mid-night. These men arrived at 6:30 a.m. to hear the Word of God. I did not have the heart to wake El up to find my "preaching clothes" so I just grabbed the first thing I came to in my unpacked bag, my Bible and my notebook and went to work. Four hours later we were still hard at it in the Word of God.

**2\_**The Swahili verse on the box reads "Leviticus 19:11 You shall not lie, nor steal, nor deal falsely with one another". These verse, in the national language, goes on all the boxes that me or any GCI team members brings to the mission field. It is hard to put a verse like this on a box and then pay a bribe. It protects both the missionary and the official. Our prayer is not - "Oh Lord bring us to an official who will be easily bribed." But rather, "Oh Lord grant us grace in the eyes of the government, - but no matter Your decision, O Lord grant us grace to always maintain a clear conscience before God and before man as Your ambassadors."

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In this dispatch...

- I. Hitting the ground running
- II. All Bibles and Bible study aids safely delivered
- III. Paul and bribes
- IV. The paying of bribes by missionaries is actually a latent form of colonial racism
- V. "Were you guilty?"
- VI. "We have not come to corrupt your government to but to redeem it..."
- VII. Prayer Requests
  - A. Ministry
  - B. Greg

Dear Prayer Warriors,

### **Hitting the ground running**

We finally found ourselves at Dr. Mukolwe's home about 11 p.m.. Sometime after mid-night we collapsed into bed. The very next morning from 7a.m. - 11

a.m. I met with a group of businessmen in Bible study. I could feel the empowerment of your prayers as well fellowshiped over the Word of God.

### **All Bibles and Bible study aids safely delivered**

In the room next to us as we studied God's holy, eternal, inerrant written Word are 8 seventy pound boxes of God's Word - Bibles, Bible study aids and Bible references works. We could feel the power of your prayers (both physical and spiritual) as we made our way through customs. We resisted the temptation of the fast track bribe, instead answering the questions honestly and clearly. In the end the customs official said, "I can see that you are a good Christian man. You may take them all in." And so we passed into the Kenyan night with all volumes unmolested and ready to be used to the glory of our risen Lord and the edification of Kenyan ministers of the gospel.

### **Paul and bribes**

In my estimation bribery is one of the scourges of the modern missionary movement. God is very clear on His teaching concerning bribes. Here are just a few of the very strong statements He makes from His holy Word...

*Ecclesiastes 7:7 For oppression makes a wise man mad, And a bribe corrupts the heart.*

*Proverbs 15:27 He who profits illicitly troubles his own house, But he who hates bribes will live.*

*Isaiah 33:15-16 He who walks righteously and speaks with sincerity, He who rejects unjust gain And shakes his hands so that they hold no bribe; He who stops his ears from hearing about bloodshed And shuts his eyes from looking upon evil; He will dwell on the heights, His refuge will be the impregnable rock; His bread will be given him, His water will be sure.*

This was Paul standard and ours as well. Paul languished in prison for two years while Felix waited in vain for a bribe. *Acts 24:26-27 "At the same time too, he was hoping that money would be given him by Paul; therefore he also used to send for him quite often and converse with him. But after two years had passed..."*

Because of Paul's unwillingness to pay bribes both Festus and King Agrippa heard the gospel.

Because of Paul's unwillingness to pay bribes a jailer and his entire household were saved and baptized

Because of Paul's unwillingness to pay bribes the gospel spread throughout the whole Praetorian guard

Because of Paul's unwillingness to pay bribes we have his writings - The Prison Epistles

I praise God that Paul did not pay bribes and I am sure all the soldiers, officials and jailers who came to Christ while he was in jail do so as well.

### **The paying of bribes by missionaries is actually a latent form of colonial racism**

I know many visiting pastors and missionaries who pay bribes on the mission field who would never think for a moment about paying a bribe in their own country. When departing their own country if faced with delays, paper work, taxes or fees they would bear up nobly, yet when entering a foreign country they think nothing of greasing the palms of officials. The only reason I can imagine for this double standard of not only refusing to pay bribes in ones own country but being incensed at the very thought, yet willingly paying bribes on the mission field is latent racism. We hold those cultures and countries in far to great esteem to ever corrupt them or insult them with bribery. We come not to corrupt the countries which receive us as guests but rather to redeem them. Bribery not only damages the country but is also damages the ministry. The new Christians raised up in the ministry are raised up blinded to this sin. It is not surprising to me when I find a ministry where the missionary has paid bribes to find the ministry pays bribes as well. Not only this bribery also damages the family. I can remember the pride of a young lady, the daughter of a missionary in an Asian country, who refused to pay bribes in order to receive her driver's license. She took it time and time again. Finally, behind her back, her father paid the bribe. For years she gave the testimony of faith till at last she was clued in by a family friend. You can imagine her humiliation. Now she pays bribes with the best of them and she is not a missionary. Contrast this with Natasha, wife of pastor Oleg. She took her driver's license test nine times before it was issued her. She was told she would pay the fee nine times and fail nine times or pay the bribe (nine times the fee). She gladly took the test nine times and now has a clear testimony. I am not ashamed of my influence on Pastor Oleg in this area, though I am ashamed for the missionary who shamed his daughter and robbed her of a great testimony.

I remember standing in the consulate of a foreign country and being told by a visa official that we must lie on our visa application "like all the others". (He meant the short term missionaries who lied on their visas to get in.) I told him we would not lie but would call on the God of heaven. I then placed my hand on his and prayed out loud, "Oh Lord God of all, you know we come to serve you in this country and teach your word. You have said the heart of the king is like a stream of water and You turn it wherever you wish. If it be Your will grant us this Visa. In the name of Jesus Christ we pray, Amen." A week later I walked through the door and this same clerk jumped to his feet and waving my passport cried out, "The man of God has come for his visa! The man of God has come for

his visa!" For I had been issued a ten year, unrestricted, multi-entrance visa with a silver "fast track" seal attached. I would rather be turned away than have Muslim officials laughing over their tea break at yet another "lying Christian dog, like all the other" For that is exactly what they do. For us, when we shake hands entering a country "*they hold no bribe*", for we have fixed on our one the "*impregnable rock*".

### **"Were you guilty?"**

I was sitting in the church office when a youth intern and ministerial student stuck his head in. The pastor asked, "Did you beat it?" He had received a traffic ticket and one of the elders who was a lawyer had told him if he would contest the ticket and request a jury trial the judge would drop the case rather than go to all that trouble. He was ecstatic and I could see the other staff in the room were happy for his ill-gotten victory. I had but two questions - First: "Were you guilty?" and Second: "When the judge asked, 'How do you plead', did you say, 'guilty'? Because anything else was a lie." The few times I have been stopped for speeding I always openly admit to the officer my guilt. After taking the ticket I pray for the officer and then I send a letter to the desk sergeant when I get a ticket letting him know what a good job the officer did. I don't lie, I don't offer a bribe. I would rather be out the money, I would rather lose my license, than be just another lying Christian dog, corrupting the system, discouraging Christian policemen and teaching young ministers to do the same.

### **"We have not come to corrupt your government to but to redeem it..."**

We are ambassadors for Christ. We come not to corrupt the country but to redeem it. Jesus did not pay bribes and because of that I will spend eternity in heaven. Paul did not pay bribes and because of that the gospel came to Europe. By God's grace and your fervent and effectual prayers we will not pay bribes and God's Word will come unblemished to all those lands which He in His sovereignty chooses to open doors which no man can shut.

By His mercy,

II Corinthians 4:1

Rev. John S. Mahon - ministering the Word of God in Kenya...

Please allow me to close with dispatch with a hymn from my prayer notebook that has been especially meaningful to me...

*(Psalms 104:33-34 "I will sing to the LORD as long as I live; I will sing praise to my God while I have my being. Let my meditation be pleasing to Him; As for me, I shall be glad in the LORD.")*

**My Jesus, I love Thee**

My Jesus, I love Thee, I know Thou art mine;  
For Thee all the follies of sin I resign.  
My gracious Redeemer, my Savior art Thou;  
If ever I loved Thee, my Jesus, 'tis now.  
*I love Thee because Thou has first loved me,  
And purchased my pardon on Calvary's tree.  
I love Thee for wearing the thorns on Thy brow;  
If ever I loved Thee, my Jesus, 'tis now.*  
I'll love Thee in life, I will love Thee in death,  
And praise Thee as long as Thou lendest me breath;  
And say when the death dew lies cold on my brow,  
If ever I loved Thee, my Jesus, 'tis now.  
*In mansions of glory and endless delight,  
I'll ever adore Thee in heaven so bright;  
I'll sing with the glittering crown on my brow;  
If ever I loved Thee, my Jesus, 'tis now.*

William R. Featherston 1864; (Featherston was only 16 years old at the time) *Born:* July 23, 1846, Montreal, Quebec, Canada ;*Died:* May 20, 1873, Montreal, Quebec, Canada. Little is known of Featherston, except that he belonged to the Wesleyan Methodist Church in Montreal (later renamed St. James Methodist Church, then St. James United Church).



Picture One



**Picture Two**