

Liz and Sergio Vilela

Prayer letter, April 2018

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Dear friends,

It was great to see many of you during our home assignment at the end of 2017. It was a busy but refreshing time, being able to reflect on our ministries in Mozambique and get excited for what God has in store for us this year and next.

We are reminded a number of times in the Bible "to love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your might" (Deuteronomy 6: 5). God doesn't want a part of our lives, or our money, or our Sunday mornings, he wants the whole of our lives, that we give the whole of our heart to Him each day, that each morning we dedicate the day to our God who is above all. It's so easy to get wrapped up in our busy lives, to focus on ourselves and what we want, and to carry on our daily routine. How different could our day be if we just said, 'here I am Lord, use me today for your purposes in whatever way that may be'. It doesn't matter where we are, or what we do, or how old we are, God can and wants to use us to build His kingdom. May we be ready and willing to be used by Him and give our lives to Him each day. As we serve God in Mozambique, it is easy to get bogged down by disappointments and frustrations, but we too need to dedicate each day to the Lord so that these feelings of disappointment and frustration turn into perseverance, patience, peace, and so on, that come from the Holy Spirit within us, so that we face each day trusting that God has it all in His hands. Here is a story that talks about one of the frustrations we face here – time keeping.

I give in!!

"You can take the person out of Britain but you can't take Britain out of the person!"

I was excited about going to our Mum's Church group for the first time on a Saturday afternoon last year. They said it started at 15:00 so I arrived at the Church a few minutes early and waited, until one of the mum's turned up about 15:40 then another about 15:50 and so on. I soon found out that this was the norm, however I was adamant that I would turn up on time each week and show the women how important it is to make the most of the time we have together. If they arrive an hour and a half late and people have to leave at 17:00, it doesn't leave much time to study the Bible together and pray. They agreed with me when I told them that, but it still kept happening.

A few weeks ago, the plan was to visit other mums and I was told that we would meet at 14:00. I thought it would be good for Chloe to come along with me to experience visiting people's homes and sharing God's Word. We set out for Church and arrived at 14:00, Chloe with her Bible in hand, ready to visit some families. However, to cut a long story short, after waiting for other mums to show up, we didn't get to do any visits as it was late and the mums that were there changed plans. So Chloe and I left there at 15:45 quite frustrated and annoyed. So we spent an hour and forty-five minutes waiting for something that didn't end up happening! Frustrated isn't the word. The enthusiasm that I had felt for the group evaporated and I actually felt quite angry, angry that I was looking forward to doing visits and that Chloe had missed out on this opportunity that had become an annoyance rather than a learning experience.

From the beginning, as I said I was adamant to prove a point by arriving on time each week. It's important to me that we use the time wisely. If someone says it starts at 15:00, it should start at 15:00 (proper British I am, hence it's Liz writing this and not Sergio the Brazilian). I would not give in! If I don't want to keep getting angry and frustrated then I need to stop attending the group as I'm not going to arrive later like them... but I didn't want to stop going as I really love being a part of the Mum's Group at Church, and what good would that do. It wouldn't change their time keeping if I were to stay or leave. It would just mean that I would miss out on fellowship with the group.... So the last option is to arrive late like the others. Nope I can't, I'm British, I can't arrive late, it's wrong, it's against my culture,.....! In the end I asked God what I should do. So I decided to give in! I needed to put aside what I think as very important in order for me to build relationships with these women, to be able to share with them, to get alongside them, to grow together, which I realised was more important than being on time. It's not good for me to continue getting frustrated with them, knowing they would arrive late. So from now on, I have my own time to arrive! I told one of the ladies and she agreed it would be good for me. I now arrive half an hour later than the given time. On Saturday we had a time of prayer and fasting which was to start at 9am. So I rocked up at 9:30 and it was so nice not to be the first person there as two ladies had

already arrived. I didn't want to change, but now I see the benefits of the change I have made. Sometimes we have to give in to things that we see as so important, that may not be so important to others, so that we can be blessed and be a blessing.

Action Team

We have had the privilege of having the Action Team live at our house for six months, and sad that the time has already come to say goodbye. They have been involved in a number of ministries, from homework clubs to helping at a school, painting, teaching English, singing and dancing at Church, playing football in the street. Their names are Ellie, Rhiannon and Iain. Here they tell us of one of their experiences.



"On the 8th of March we celebrated International Woman's Day with all the incredible teachers of the Reidos Reis (King of Kings) School where we have helped out twice a week. Around 20 of the female teachers gathered to share in fellowship, have an amazing meal and share examples of the powerful women in the bible who we can look up to. The male teachers all expressed their gratitude and appreciation to all their fellow female co-workers which was very encouraging to see. The day was a big event at the school and we are blessed to have been a part of it. In a culture where

women are more oppressed it was beautiful to see them enjoying, celebrating and encouraging each other - and being appreciated by everyone for all the hard work they put in every day at the school."



To find out more about the action team, check out our blog at lsvilela.wordpress.com

We would appreciate it if you could pray for:

- The action team who will be going on tour, visiting different Churches around the UK and speaking of their experiences here.
- Liz as she develops her ministry by doing a course in France in July/August in play therapy skills. She will do her placement at a local Christian primary school. Please pray that God's hand will be on this ministry and pray for the family who will be left in Beira as Liz is away for three weeks.
- Chloe at her new school, Joshua as he starts nursery.
- Sergio as he continues to work with the Pastor responsible for mission and outreach at the Mozambican Baptist Convention.

Liz and Sergio

If you would like to support Liz and Sergio by prayer and committed regular giving, visit bmsworldmission.org/partners or call 01235 517617 for a 24:7 Partners leaflet.



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