

**Primitive Baptists
in
East Africa**

On Monday, September 3, 2007, I left for a two-week trip to Tanzania and Kenya in East Africa. This would be my second trip to visit Elder Obey in his native land. I was also looking forward to visiting some Primitive Baptists in Kenya who are under his pastoral care.

I drove to the airport in Atlanta, Georgia, and caught an afternoon flight on KLM nonstop to Amsterdam, Holland. It was a nine-hour flight. After a three-hour layover in Amsterdam, I caught a KLM flight to Dar es Salaam. It was also a nine-hour flight with a short stop at Mt. Kilimanjaro.

I arrived in Dar es Salaam around 10:00 PM on Tuesday night. Elder Obey and his wife and children, along with about twenty members of the church, met me at the airport. I could see Brother Obey a long way off. He stood head and shoulders above everyone else. He was waving those long arms and smiling in a way that made me feel very welcome in this far away land. It had been 16 months since my last visit here and I was so thankful for the privilege to be in their presence again.

Brother Obey offered prayer and thanked the Lord for my safe arrival. Then Brother Kenny drove Brother Obey and me to the inn where he and I stayed for the next six nights. It was a comfortable place. The rooms had air conditioning and hot water!

Brother Obey is such a dear friend in Christ and easy to be with. We were up very late discussing the church in Tanzania and the gospel labor in Kenya. Obey also wanted to know all about the Vestavia church and the ministers that had visited them in Tanzania.

On Wednesday afternoon Brother Kenny picked us up and took us to the church for a 4:30 worship service. Brother Kenny is Brother Obey's close friend and right hand man. He knows how to get things done in Tanzania. He was one of Brother Obey's first converts in Tanzania. He is such a blessing from the Lord. He conducts the service when Brother Obey is in Kenya. He is also a very good driver and drove us everywhere we went. I asked Brother Obey if he ever drove in Dar es Salaam. He said he didn't. When I asked why, he said, "Pastor Sam, I am a young man, and I have lots of work to do in Africa. I don't want to kill myself." I can totally understand. The traffic is wild!

The First Primitive Baptist Church of Tanzania was blessed to purchase a small lot (almost two thirds of an acre) in Dar es Salaam, the capitol of Tanzania. The city has a population of around 5,000,000 people. Land in the city is scarce. The Lord blessed them to find this property to buy at a price they could afford. They have moved their tent to this new location and are very happy to have their own land. It is in what they consider a middle class community, but the streets are not paved, and there are no building codes, garbage pickup or sewage!

There were about 60 people in attendance for this service. The membership is made up mostly of young couples with small children. The members have to walk to church, but the distance is not very far for most of them. It was so good to be in their fellowship again and hear them singing the beautiful hymns in their native tongue.

Brother Obey introduced me in English, and Brother Kenny translated in Swahili. Then Brother Obey translated for me. I told them that my wife and Vestavia church, along with many Primitive Baptists from the USA, sent their love and Christian greetings. I commended them for their beautiful singing and expressed how happy I was that they now owned their land and how I hoped they would soon have a church building.

I preached for about an hour on the love of God. I used Romans 3:23 to show that all of us are sinners and do not deserve to be loved by God. Then I went to Romans 5:8 to show that His love is unconditional and that He loved us even when we were dead in sin. I quoted Romans 8:32 and explained that His love for us caused Him to give His Son to die for us. I used Romans 8:38 to show that His love is eternal. I quoted Romans 9:13 and explained that God's love does not embrace everyone.

I also taught on our responsibility to love God and our neighbors and even our enemies. I went to 1 Cor. 13 to show how important brotherly love is in the church, and, that without love, all we do in the church is worthless. The church rejoiced in this message, and we discussed the subject through questions and answers for about thirty minutes.

I felt I was in a very sound Primitive Baptist church, full of love for God and for Elder Obey and for each other. Their fellowship in the gospel was so genuine, and they were very happy to have a pastor from the States to visit with them and hold some extra meetings. I was encouraged to see this young church doing so well.

The inn in which we were staying had a common area where guests could meet each other and visit. On Thursday I enjoyed visiting with a number of people. I met a missionary from Sweden who was very kind and soft-spoken. We got into a good Bible discussion. He said he had helped save many people in Tanzania by preaching the gospel to the lost and persuading them to accept Christ as their Saviour. I told him I believed God sent His Son to save his people out of all nations and tongues and tribes and families and that the Holy Spirit would reach all of God's children all over the world and cause them to be born again without the help of the preacher or the gospel. I quoted Matt. 1:21, John 6:37-39 and John 3:8. He seemed surprised and asked, "Then what are you doing in Tanzania?"

That was a fair question! I told him I did not come to Africa to do what Jesus said He came all the way from Heaven to do! I was here to bring the good news that Jesus Christ finished the work of redemption and saved every one the Father gave him to save. I explained that the gospel does not bring life and immortality. I insisted that the purpose of the gospel is to bring life and immortality to LIGHT. It makes manifest what God has already done for us (II Timothy 2:10). This was the essence of our conversation. He said he found my views interesting! I think I made a friend, but I don't think I made a convert!! How difficult it must be to accept the fact that you had spent your life trying to do something that Jesus said He finished right by himself 2,000 years ago on the cross.

That afternoon, I really enjoyed preaching on Matthew 1:21. I taught the necessity of the virgin birth. Jesus came into this sinful world by way of the virgin birth in order to escape the curse that was on Adam's descendents. As the sinless one, He was qualified to die for the sins of His people. He bore their sins in His own body and paid for them with His own blood. They were His people by choice (Eph. 1:4), but they were lost in sin. He didn't save one more or one less than He came to save. He saved His people. He didn't try to save them. He didn't make salvation available. He didn't make them savable. He saved them, and He did it by himself!! It is finished (John 19:30).

These dear people love the gospel and rejoice in the finished work of Jesus Christ. What a joy it is to preach to them. They responded with strong amens and happy faces. I cannot remember a time when I ever enjoyed preaching any more than I did on this occasion. I can enjoy visiting with people from all over the world and talk with them about many subjects, including the Bible, but, beloved, there is a fellowship in the true gospel that is like no other fellowship in this world.

After the service, we discussed some basic principles of Bible study. We had another good question and answer session. They asked a lot of questions. They are eager to learn all they can about the Word of God.

Friday afternoon, we met at the church to sing some, and Brother Obey wanted me to teach on baptism before we drove to the Indian Ocean to baptize seven converts. After the singing started, a neighbor next to the church started playing very loud music. It was so loud it was overpowering the singing. I asked Brother Obey why the neighbor was so rude. He said, "Pastor Sam, it is spiritual warfare." The neighbor is a Muslim, and he had done this before. While Brother Obey and I were talking, Brother Kenny told us another neighbor said he was in need of prayer. Brother Kenny knew this neighbor and asked if I would pray for him. While I was praying for this troubled man, I asked the Lord to please deliver us from the oppressive noise. Before I finished praying, the music stopped. What a mighty deliverance that was!

It took about an hour to drive to the ocean for the baptisms. The Indian Ocean is an ideal place to baptize in a land where there is very little clean water. Brother Obey's daughter, Jenny, was among those baptized. It was a blessed service.

Saturday, we met for an afternoon service and communion and feet washing. This, too, was such a blessed service. There was no loud music! My brother, Dan, had sent enough money to cater a meal for the whole church, and Brother Kenny made arrangements for the meal to be cooked and delivered. It was almost dark when the food arrived. The church family waited patiently. I was deeply impressed with their manners as they ate this meal of roasted chicken and fried potatoes served in foil. Soft drinks were also provided. Brother Obey said it was a rare feast in Tanzania. The children were so quiet and neat and well behaved. They are poor people but they are full of grace and dignity and gratitude.

There was some food left, and I suggested we give some to the Muslim next door. Obey and Kenny thought it was a good idea, but they did not want to take the food to him. They sent Mary!! She said the Muslim received the food and thanked her.

Sunday was a beautiful day. The weather was so pleasant. Every chair was filled, and the children sat on a rug on the ground. There were about 75 people present. I felt burdened to preach on conditional time salvation. I preached on how the word of God will save us from many things in this present evil world if we will obey it (Isaiah 1:19-20). By simple obedience to God's word, we can save ourselves from drugs, alcohol, adultery, HIV, hatred, self-pity, worry, fear, jealousy and laziness. I gave some scriptural examples of how willful sin would bring much sorrow upon us. I enjoyed preaching to them on how we are to live in this world. The people responded very well to this message, and I rejoiced that they received these words of warning and admonition with joy and gladness.

After the service, I visited in Brother Obey's home. In addition to their four children, there is also a set of twins living with them who had been abandoned. Sister Mary wanted me to see her little seamstress shop next to their house. She teaches school, but she also started a business with two sewing machines, and she hires two ladies to sew for the public. It is a way of making some extra money. She is such a wonderful pastor's wife and mother and church member. It was a joy to be in their home again.

We had another service at 4:30 Sunday afternoon. In this last service, I felt directed by the Spirit to preach on living by faith. This young church faces many challenges. They are in a land where 40% of the population is Muslim. There is crushing poverty and disease. They are a little flock. As of this writing, they do not have a church building. They don't have other churches and ministers in the country with whom to fellowship and draw strength. Because of the work in Kenya, Brother Obey has to be away a lot. But God is faithful, and His grace is sufficient. I also assured them that the Primitive Baptists in America would not forget them. This message was greatly needed, and it was well received. This church loves the preached word, and they appreciate all the preachers from America who have visited them, and they hope many more will visit them in years to come.

All together, I preached six sermons at the church in Dar es Salaam. I feel the Spirit directed my mind on what to preach on in each service. It was a blessed series of meetings, and I pray that this church will remain strong in the Lord and faithful to the truth that has been committed to their trust. I pray they will be a good example for other Primitive Baptist churches in Africa. Brother Obey hopes to start many churches in Tanzania and Kenya in years to come. Please pray that God will provide many more preachers among them to help with this great work. I felt a great sadness as we took the parting hand, and they sung, "God be with you till we meet again."

On my first trip to Africa, I never dreamed that God was already opening a door for Elder Johnson to preach the gospel in Kenya. But now, on Monday morning, I woke up early to pack my bags to go to Kenya. Kenny drove Obey and me to the airport, where we bought our tickets for a flight to Nairobi on Kenyan Airlines. We had a long layover in Nairobi. It gave me plenty of time to get a visa at the airport for my visit in Kenya. I was so tired I went sound asleep in the airport. We finally boarded our flight to Kisumu. On this flight, I sat by a doctor from the Center for Disease Control in Atlanta. She is working with people who are studying the problem of Malaria in Africa. There are so many good people in this world trying to help third world countries, and I have been blessed to meet a number of them on my trips to east Africa.

It was dark when we arrived in Kisumu. It was a very small airport up in the highlands of Kenya. Brother Martin was to meet us here, but he was late. Finally, he arrived with a rented car and driver. I was so thankful to finally meet Brother Martin. He appeared to be a kind and humble man.

We loaded our bags in the trunk and started for Kisii. The car was a 1995 Honda Civic. They put me up front with the driver, and Obey and Martin sat in back with a Brother William from Kisii. I was too tired, and the road was too rough, to have a conversation with these brethren. Fatigue was overtaking me. It was so dark out in the country. I asked the driver how long it would take to get to Kisii. He said it would take about 1 hour. All along the road we would see so many people walking. Some were crippled. There were so many children. It was very sad to me.

After about an hour I asked the driver, "How much longer?" He said "about 45 minutes"! It was one of those times in life when it seemed the road would never end. Every time I would ask the driver how much longer we had to go, I felt like a little kid asking, "Daddy, how much further?" I finally decided I needed to just spend this time thanking God I was not walking. After two and one half hours, we got to Kisii.

We pulled up at an old hotel that looked like it had been abandoned long ago. I saw dogs and cats going in and out the front door. Brother Obey told me that the reservations Brother Martin had made for us at another hotel had been misplaced, and we would have to stay here for one night. We got our bags and climbed four flights of stairs and walked down a long dark hall to our rooms. I was so tired I didn't care as long as there was a bed in my room and a lock on the door. I quickly got in bed and turned out the light. I was so thankful to be lying down.

I had been in Africa for seven days and had not heard a mosquito. But there were some in my room tonight. I had left my insect spray in Tanzania! Thank the Lord, there was a mosquito net over the bed, so I got up and let it down. I turned out the light again, and I heard a drip in the bathtub. It was loud! I started laughing! I got up and put a towel under the drip and finally went to sleep about midnight. I fell asleep thinking about how this room was probably like a palace compared to the prisons Paul stayed in, and he didn't complain.

The traffic woke me up at 5:00 AM. I had no idea when I woke up that I was about to experience one of the most enjoyable days of my life. It was a beautiful day. I looked out the window and realized we were in the mountains. We were in the beautiful highlands of Kenya. The air was cool. I felt rested. I had a delicious cup of instant coffee and a wonderful conversation with Brother Martin in the restaurant. He is so polite and well mannered. He speaks very good English. I asked him to relate his experience with the Lord, and it reminded me of Saul's experience on the road to Damascus.

Elder Vernon Johnson had been in correspondence with Brother Martin for about two years before he and Elder Obey visited him in February of this year. There is a very interesting audio account given by Elder Johnson at www.vestaviapbc.org describing how Brother Martin contacted Brother Johnson. Elder Johnson and Elder Obey baptized over 100 converts to the truth, and they are members of the First Primitive Baptist Church in Tanzania and will remain so until a church can be constituted in Kisii.

At 9:00 AM our driver arrived and drove us way out in the country. This is a very poor region, but it is beautiful. They can grow lots of food here. The soil is rich, the rain is plentiful, and the climate is agreeable year round. They just do not have any way of making money. We saw lots of people living very much like people would have lived hundreds of years ago. Most of their farming is done with a hoe.

We left the main road and drove down a dirt road for a while, and then we left that road and drove on a rough path for quite a while. Transportation in the rural parts of Kenya is extremely difficult.

All the Primitive Baptists in the Kisii area are within a 20-mile radius of each other, but they can't all meet in the same place. They all have to walk, including Brother Martin. There are six different study groups that meet on Sunday in six different locations, and there are several men who lead these study groups. They teach the best they can under Brother Martin's direction. He visits among them as often as he can.

We went as far as the car would take us, and then we walked a good distance to the place on the side of the mountain where about 35 people had gathered under the trees to worship. They were already singing. Brother Martin says they enjoy singing the hymns so much that they often sing for two hours. He had arranged for me to hold meetings with three of the groups. This first meeting was so blessed with the manifest presence of the Lord. This one service was worth my trip to Africa. These people love the Lord and the doctrine of Grace. What a joy it was to preach to them! Elder Johnson, Elder Obey and Brother Martin have done a great job teaching them the true gospel.

After the service, we walked down the mountain about a mile to the river. We had prayer and sung a song, and Brother Obey baptized five people. It was a beautiful scene. On our way back up the mountain, it started raining, so we all took shelter in Brother William's home. There were about 35 to 40 people in this little house. It is a simple house with mud walls, a dirt floor and a tin roof. It was very dark in this house. There was one candle burning.

It rained for about one and one half hours. I had a five-pound sack of candy in my bag. I asked Brother Martin to have all the children gather around me, and I would give them some candy. Obey said, "Pastor, all of us love candy." So I gave everyone some candy. I had already given most of my candy to the folks in Tanzania. I was so thankful I had saved one bag. Brother William's wife cooked some supper for everyone. She cooks on an open fire in a little hut behind the house. As they ate this simple meal, I could see that these people truly love each other and enjoy Christian fellowship. I was told that the Primitive Baptist church has made a dramatic difference in how they all get along with each other.

After the rain, we walked to the car. The drive up the mountain on a very wet and slippery road was a great challenge. It would have been hard for a 4-wheel drive vehicle, but that little Honda civic made it. Obey suggested that the Lord was behind us pushing.

We had a long drive back to Kisii. The Mash Park Hotel, where we had reservations for the next two nights, was very comfortable by African standards. The scenery out my window was beautiful. I had enjoyed such a wonderful day in the Lord's service, and, now, I was blessed with a comfortable room.

Nelda had been so faithful to call me on Obey's cell phone, and here, at this hotel, we got good reception. It was always such a blessing to hear from my faithful and loving wife. Others from the states called, and I was so thankful to hear from all of them.

I rested well. The next morning I found some hot water in the restaurant and made some delicious instant coffee. Brothers Obey and Martin joined me, and they ate breakfast. We had time to have a good Bible discussion. I was so impressed with Brother Martin's grasp of the scriptures. Four years ago, he was a worldly man with no interest in God or the Bible. His experience with the Lord harmonizes perfectly with the doctrine that God, by sovereign grace, calls His elect without the assistance of the gospel and causes them to fear Him and hunger for Him.

Brother Vernon Johnson has taught him well. He spent 21 days in Brother Martin's home back in February. He had been teaching him through sermon tapes and written material for two years before his visit to Africa. We are taught in the scriptures not to ordain a novice, but it is my belief that Brother Martin will soon be ready for ordination.

Brother Martin has gone from house to house telling people about the Primitive Baptist doctrine and church. He lost his job because of his devotion to serve these people as their spiritual guide. He has made a great personal sacrifice to labor in the kingdom of our Lord. He is full of zeal and has such a deep appreciation for the truth concerning the grace of God. I pray that he and Brother Obey will be blessed with good health and a long life to preach the gospel all over Tanzania and Kenya.

We left about 9:00 AM to meet with another group. This group was in a more remote area. After we went as far as we could go by car, we got out and walked about a mile to the meeting place. It was also an open-air meeting under some trees. After a good song service, I preached on the salvation of the dying thief. I taught that he railed on Christ just like the other thief. He had no fear of God and no respect for Jesus Christ. However, a miracle took place in his life while he was on the cross. There were no preachers or missionaries trying to save him. God worked directly in

this man and taught him that he was a sinner. God taught him to have a fear of God. He taught him that Jesus was sinless and that He was Lord and that he has a kingdom beyond death. John 6:45 says, "and they shall be all taught of God." This thief is a great example of what God can teach a sinner without a human teacher being involved. (Hebrews 8:11) Without being baptized, joining the church or having any good works, the thief heard Jesus say to him, "Today shalt thou be with me in paradise." He was saved alone by grace. I taught them that God had been saving His people by sovereign grace for thousands of years without any help from preachers, just like He saved the dying thief. This gospel of grace gives them great hope that many of their African ancestors will be in heaven, even though they had never heard the gospel. What good news! What glad tidings! What a Savior!

The other thief was apparently left in his sins and went to an everlasting hell where we all deserved to go. I explained that God was under no obligation to save any member of Adam's family. It was all based on His sovereign grace.

However, I taught that, had this thief been delivered from physical death that day and lived to see another day on this earth, he would have benefited from the gospel. It would have helped to enlighten his mind. Brother Martin commented on how wonderful it is to see what the gospel can do and what it can't do. He talked a lot about how a man dead in sin cannot hear the gospel. I did rejoice to see him rejoicing in the truth.

Elder Obey dismissed the congregation and asked the leaders of the six groups to remain. He wanted me to charge them concerning their responsibilities. However, he spoke to them first. He spoke in English so I could understand, and Brother Martin translated for him. What a charge! He admonished them to live godly lives before the people. Without a godly life, nothing they taught would be meaningful. Second, he insisted that they study the Bible every day so that they would have something to teach the people. Third, he told them they needed to be in subjection to Brother Martin, Elder Johnson and himself. Without this, there would be strife and confusion.

Finally, he brought up the case of one of the group leaders who had strayed from the truth and was introducing false doctrine among the members. He said he and Elder Johnson had warned him twice, and he would not stop teaching this false doctrine, so they had him excluded from the church. He cautioned them to avoid this brother. He warned them that the same would happen to anyone else who tried to introduce false doctrine. He had their full attention. What a blessing that these men see the danger of false doctrine. The church of Jesus Christ is the pillar and ground of the truth, and those who cause divisions contrary to the doctrine must be marked and avoided. This is a sad but important function of the New Testament church.

As Brother Obey spoke to these men, I was so impressed to see how powerful his presence was among them and how much they respected him. Spending this week with Brother Obey in Kenya has helped me to see clearer than ever the wisdom of God in raising up this native African to help establish the church in this far away land. He relates so well with his brothers in Kenya, and they love him and have great respect for him. He and Brother Martin have such love and respect for each other. How good and how pleasant it is for brethren to dwell together in unity!

Brother Obey was a follower in America. He was very humble and submissive to our elders and to the church. He was a great student. He learned all he could during the year and a half he was a member at Vestavia. But I can tell you that he is a strong leader among these people. He loves these people in Kenya. He travels two days by bus one way to visit them and preach to them. He is willing to spend and be spent in God's service, and they are not able to give him any financial support.

It was getting late in the day when we left to meet the other group. It took us two hours to go about 20 miles. This group had a little building in which to meet. This was the largest group with whom I had met. Their singing was so good, but our time with them was so short. I spoke a few minutes, and we served communion. I was so sorry we had to rush through this meeting.

Brother Martin wanted me to visit in his home and meet his parents. It was very late when we got there. It is also a mud house with dirt floors and a tin roof. Brother Martin does not have electricity. However, Elder Johnson bought a generator for him, and he went out and started it up, and we had electric lights by which to visit.

I enjoyed meeting his parents. They are very pleasant people. His father is well educated and speaks very good English. He has not joined the Primitive Baptist yet, but he sure did learn to love Brother Johnson while he stayed in Martin's home for 21 days.

At the hotel, I asked Brother Obey what time we needed to get up in order to catch a bus to Nairobi so we could catch a plane back to Tanzania. He said around 7:00 AM. I asked him if the desk clerk would wake us up. He said, "No, pastor, I will wake you up." Well, one thing I have learned about Brother Obey is that he can sleep, as he says, "like a dead man." "Okay, but who is going to wake you up?" I had not seen Brother Martin laugh. He is a very intense man. However, when I asked this question, he bent over laughing and could not stop! I was so glad to see he had a sense of humor. Elder Pat Byrd always said that a sense of humor is our survival kit in this world. It is enlightening to lighten up!!

I woke up at 5:00 AM. I found some hot water and had three cups of coffee. I finally knocked on Obey's door at 7:00 AM. He was sound asleep. He and Brother Martin had a leisurely breakfast and finally called the driver to come pick us up and take us to the bus station. Brother Martin was going to ride on the bus with us. He wanted to be with us as long as he could. I was in a hurry to get to the bus station. I did not want to miss the bus to Nairobi. I had a lot to learn this day about buses in Kisii.

First of all, it was not a bus station. They just park out on the street and wait for the bus to fill up before they leave for Nairobi. It didn't fill up very fast. We left at 10:30. If I had known what this bus ride was going to be like, I would not have been in a hurry to get on it.

Kisii is in the mountains. On Monday, we had flown into these mountains. To save money and see some more of Kenya, I suggested we take the bus. It was only nine dollars one-way. I asked Brother Obey if he didn't enjoy reading and studying on the bus like I do on a Greyhound. He said, "No, Pastor Sam, the bus takes my mind away." I didn't know what he meant by that statement, but I was about to find out.

The first part of this bus trip was like being on the "scream machine" at Six Flags for two-hours. I was scared. The driver had one mission in life, and that was to get us to Nairobi as fast as he could. We were passing trucks on hills and curves. There were no guardrails. It was crazy! It took my mind away!!! All I could do was pray. Brothers Obey and Martin are so vital to this work in Africa, and I begged the Lord to spare their life.

We finally got out of the mountains, and the road was smooth and straight. What a relief! We were running about 70 miles an hour when one of the back tires blew out. I must give the driver credit. He brought us to a safe stop. While he changed the tire, I checked the other tires and found that they were all slick!

We had about an hour of smooth straight roads. The countryside was beautiful. We saw a lot of Masai tribesmen out in the fields caring for large herds of cows. These Masai people are very famous for their ability to hunt and kill wild animals, including lions, with nothing but a spear. They wear the native dress. We also saw lots of sheep and goats. We saw beautiful fields of corn. I saw one wild animal on this road. It was a gazelle. It was beautiful. I had almost decided that all this beautiful scenery was worth the scare.

I soon found out that there was something as bad as being scared. We came up on a long section of road that lasted for two hours. It was as rough as a washboard with a lot of potholes thrown in. If we had been going five or six miles an hour, it would have been rough, but we were going 30-40 mph. It was shaking us every way you could be shaken. It took my mind away!!

As we got near the city of Nairobi, the roads improved, and we finally got on a four-lane road with road signs. Nairobi is a large city with lots of traffic. We missed the non-stop flight to Dar es Salaam. However, they could get us on a flight on a small plane that would go through Zanzibar, an island just off the coast of Tanzania. We took it and made it to Dar es Salaam by 9:00 PM. Kenny and Mary met us at the airport.

It had been a wonderful trip to Kenya. The food and transportation in Africa is rough for spoiled Americans, but the people are wonderful. Surely the Lord has many people in this poverty stricken land, and the blessings of heaven

will someday be theirs by the grace of God. I just hope many more of them can know the truth about the grace of God while they live in this world.

People come to Africa for many different reasons. My reason for making this trip was to preach the gospel of grace and to encourage Elder Obey and Brother Martin in one of the greatest tasks any two men have faced in the Primitive Baptist church in my lifetime.

Not everyone has a burden or an opportunity to go to Africa, but I would like to encourage all who read this to please spend some time praying fervently for these good men. Daily life is hard for them, especially in the area of traveling. Brother Martin's greatest need in the rural area where he lives is a better means of transportation, and, if anyone has a desire to help him purchase a vehicle, it would be deeply appreciated.

I was scheduled to catch a KLM flight back to the States Friday evening at 11:00 PM, but the plane was delayed until 3:00 AM. I missed my nonstop flight from Amsterdam to Atlanta, so they routed me through Detroit. All these flights were smooth and uneventful. I arrived home on Saturday evening at 11:00 PM. I had been up for 50 hours. I was weary in body but happy in the Lord. My dear wife greeted me with love and open arms. The next day Vestavia Church received me with open arms and words of love and encouragement. How blessed I am to have a loving family and a loving church who supports me in these gospel labors!

Your servant in Christ,

Elder Sam Bryant