

KAPASSENI CALLING

AN UPDATE FROM THE KAPASSENI PROJECT COMMITTEE

November 2000

November 25 Film Preview: *Journey To Kapasseni*

In 1999 six Vancouver Islanders travelled across the world to Kapasseni, Mozambique to help build a school. Their remarkable journey was beautifully filmed by Ben Fox, and made into an evocative 50 minute documentary by Bill Weaver, in association with Vision TV and CIDA. It tells the story of the journey and how it affected the lives of the travellers. In addition, the evening will include an update and slides from this year's visit to Kapasseni, singing by members of the Gettin' Higher Choir and the Moja Africa Singers, refreshments and Mozambican crafts. Admission at the door is by donation (\$10/\$5 suggested), with proceeds to help Kapasseni's school. The evening starts at 7:30 pm on 25 November 2000, at the David Lam auditorium in UVic's MacLaurin Building. Come and meet us!!

Mwawanga!!! (Hello)

Much has been accomplished in Kapasseni in the last two years. We know that many of you who have been aware of our project to help this Mozambican village may be wondering what has been happening. Others who are just finding out about the Kapasseni Project may be curious. So we put together this report, to tell you more about Kapasseni village, how this remarkable project got started, what we have been doing in partnership with our friends in Mozambique, and what our goals are for the next year. The pictures are from our trip to the village this year. So many diverse people and groups, in Canada and in Mozambique, have helped by praying and contributing time, skills, materials, facilities and funds. Thank you all so much, and God bless you.

– Joseph and Perpetua Alfazema and friends

Kapasseni Village, Mozambique

On the map, Kapasseni Village is in Sofala province of Mozambique, near to the Zambezi River and the borders with Zimbabwe and Malawi. The nearest big town is Beira, almost half way up the coast. For 16 years there was a brutal civil war in Mozambique, and the people of Kapasseni became refugees in neighbouring countries – and in Canada. Joseph Alfazema arrived here in 1984, his wife Perpetua joined him in 1986.

In 1998 they returned to Kapasseni, and Joseph reunited with his mother after 28 years. People had returned after the war, but were devastated. There was no infrastructure and the whole area was strewn with landmines.

Village Chief's Plea

The village chief Francisco Simente begged Joseph and Perpetua to help with four priority areas:

- a school, for the children's future;
- a well, for clean water;
- a health centre, for basic healthcare; and
- a Christian church, for spiritual support (Christianity has a long history there).



The School Built With Song

The Alfazemas promised to help, first with a school. Their community at Redeemer Lutheran Church rallied, and Perpetua's connection with Shivon Robinsong led to further support from the Gettin' Higher Choir and renowned singer Ann Mortifee. Their sold-out concert in 1999 at St. Andrew's Cathedral raised almost \$11,000, enough to build a temporary school and run it for a year.

Six people from Victoria travelled to Kapasseni with over a ton of school supplies and building materials. Though the country roads were considered impassable due to rains, they persevered and with assistance that seemed heaven-sent, they made their way to the remote village. The night they arrived, a drum sent out the message for a gathering, and the next day people came from all over the area. They happily organised into work parties, cleared land, and with great efficiency built Kapasseni Primary School in 2 days. Three teachers were hired, 150 children and 30 adults were enrolled, and school uniforms and bags were supplied.

Building the school rejuvenated the villagers' spirit of community, much to the joy of Chief Francisco Simente, who said: "*Kapasseni was once a dead village, but now it has come back to life*". 75% of Mozambicans are illiterate, and Kapasseni parents see in the school the promise of a brighter future for their children. The children are eager to learn.



Escola Primaria de Kapasseni

In the summer of 2000, following another successful fundraising concert, Perpetua and Joseph returned to Kapasseni with Allen and Sylvia Gledhill.

They found that the villagers had already fired bricks and started building a permanent school. On the spot, the visitors re-aligned the budget to supply corrugated tin roofing, cement, windows, and doors with padlocks. The opening is tentatively planned for next February, and will be marked with a Kapasseni-style celebration and feast.

The teachers hired in 1999 are still with us. In addition, the Ministry of Education has arranged for an accredited teacher to visit Kapasseni two half-days a week. He meets the teachers and does demonstration classes.

The students receive instruction in Portuguese reading and writing, and in arithmetic. After school, the older students tend a nearby garden plot, where sweet potatoes and cassava are flourishing.

This year we took new school uniforms for the students, who were overjoyed to receive them. Designed by our kind friend Heather Fox in Victoria, the uniforms are mid-blue T-shirts with the bright Kapasseni school logo on the front. The girl students love their colourful cotton skirts: pink paisley for the younger girls and grey for the older girls. Perpetua got the skirts at a Victoria thrift shop!

Shared Food and Lodging

Kapasseni covers a very wide-spread area, and some children walk for more than an hour to come to school. During our visit, eight students were staying at the school five days a week, sleeping on the dirt floor in a classroom open to the outdoors. The villagers had constructed a hut for our visiting team, so the Alfazemas took the eight children in and shared sheets and blankets (even in Mozambique it can get cold at night). Including the chickens, it was quite a crowd!

The main problem was that these children would bring only enough food for one meal a day. The first morning, while preparing cornmeal porridge, Perpetua and Sylvia

were surrounded by hungry faces. Moved to help, they started cooking porridge for all, which was greatly appreciated. A full stomach really helps children to learn better. We want to have a breakfast program next year.

In other news, the Canadian High Commission in Maputo has donated \$3,400 pay for 40 desks and 2 cupboards for the school. Benjamin Nhampopo will supervise three villagers in building the desks, which will be tables for three students each with attached benches. This will be a big improvement from sitting on the floor!

Our Mozambican Contacts

To link with Kapasseni, we in Victoria depend on our three "contact persons" in and near the coastal city of Beira. Benjamin Nhampopo is a cabinet maker, Benjamin Simente is a policeman, and Job Marcos Saene works in the office and on the boats of a shipping company. Mr Saene's fluency in Sena, Portuguese, and English has been very useful. These three men receive small monthly honoraria for their work in communication, purchasing, information gathering, government liaison, and travel to Kapasseni village, two days away.



Wells and Wellness

In past droughts, mothers with children on their backs walked 10 km each way to and from a pond, balancing a bucket of water on their heads. So a priority has been to get reliable sources of clean water nearby. A grant of \$18,750 from Canadian Lutheran World Relief allowed us to hire a well-drilling rig in Beira. Two out of three boreholes struck water at around 50 metres. Pumps were installed and a village person was trained in maintenance. The villagers have initiated an annual levy of \$1.00 per household to pay for replacement parts. The water had a salty taste, so Perpetua brought back to Beira a sample for testing. The results showed that the salt is OK for human health, but a further chemical and microbial analysis will be done to help ensure safety. The villagers themselves expressed delight with this clean, more abundant, and well-situated water.

Green Belt Movement

One local environmental problem has been deforestation, as villagers have cut down trees to get heating and cooking fuel. The ecological degradation has contributed to reduced economic activity, malnutrition, high infant mortality, and shorter life spans.

Through contacts Perpetua made at the Sokoni Conference held near Seattle in October 1999, she was invited to attend a two-week Pan-African Green Belt workshop in Nairobi, Kenya this September. The Green Belt Movement is an environmental movement based in Kenya. There were 70 workshop participants from all over Africa, as well as Haiti.

Participants were encouraged to integrate the environmental awareness they gained at the workshop with the aims of their development projects.

The workshop raised awareness about issues such as tree planting, water harvesting, making organic fertiliser and pesticides, composting, food storage, and food self-sufficiency.

Perpetua took these ideas back to Kapasseni to confer with the villagers on their priorities (tree-planting and year-round food supply) and to implement some of the things she had learned. These included demonstration of a nine-week compost procedure and harvesting of indigenous tree seeds for a tree nursery.

With agro-forestry and food security our priorities, Green Belt will supply US \$1,000 for seeds. Sites have been chosen for growing corn, cabbages, and trees. This will be a step towards sustainable local development

Food For The Hungry

Although the area around Kapasseni has great agricultural potential, the villagers often go hungry because of limited food production. And in early 2000, while southern Mozambique was flooded, Kapasseni actually suffered food shortages due to a drought.

Our liaison in Mozambique with the Christian aid organisation "Food for the Hungry" has led to much agricultural help. Because they see Sofala province as "most deprived", they have chosen to focus their work there. Our committee members visited an experimental farm near Beira and were given cuttings of the morringa tree, the young leaves of which can be cooked and are high in Vitamin A. "Resisto" sweet potato cuttings and cassava cuttings were also available. Also, contact person Job bought superior open-pollinated maize (corn) seed from them.

These initiatives will help to provide food for the hungry of Kapasseni.

Spiritual Support

While our focus has been on education, health and agriculture, we have also worked on finding a Sena-speaking pastor for this remote village. We have referred this issue to the Lutheran Church in Mozambique. Meanwhile, services have been held in the village throughout the year, led by the volunteer soccer coach and gardener. The people sing in the local Sena language with joy and enthusiasm.

We would emphasise that we are not seeking to impose a foreign religion on the villagers. Rather, we are responding in partnership to the spiritual needs expressed by Chief Simente. Christianity has a long history in the area, with a local Mozambican flavour. The development assistance we have provided is intended for all, regardless of their spiritual beliefs. The temporary school building has been used for services, but the school itself is secular and no religious instruction is provided as part of the curriculum, as stipulated by Mozambican law.

Health Centre

There is a great need for healthcare in Kapasseni. Many children and adults suffer from treatable and preventable ailments, such as ear and eye infections and diarrhea. Other more serious illnesses include bilharzia, malaria, dengue fever and yellow fever. The first-aid man we hired last year continues to attend the school daily with his now-empty first aid kit – the medicine and supplies we delivered last summer were used up in a matter of days. The villagers have chosen a site for a health centre and are firing bricks for a building. The government has promised to help us find a suitably trained Registered Nurse when we have a building, medical equipment, medicines, and financing. This is a fundraising priority.



MISSION STATEMENT

The Kapasseni Project is dedicated to assisting in the regeneration of Mozambique by providing children and their families with educational opportunities, medical assistance, agricultural activities and spiritual support.

2000 Budget and Finances

The table shows our funding and what we spent them on.

FUNDS IN 2000

Balance from 1999	\$ 8,160
Fundraising concert proceeds	\$12,990
Lutheran World Relief grant	\$18,750
Cdn High Commission grant	\$ 3,060
Other donations	\$ <u>3,520</u>
Total Funds	\$46,480

EXPENDITURES IN 2000

School building & desks	\$12,360
Building labourers	\$ 1,500
Teachers and first aid man	\$ 2,460
Mozambican contact persons	\$ 900
Wells and pump	\$18,750
Coordinators' travel	\$ 5,300
School supplies & uniforms	\$ 3,830
Administration & bank charges	\$ <u>860</u>
Total Expenditures	\$45,960

- The Kapasseni Project is run entirely by volunteers, so administration costs are very low.
- The brick school building erected this year cost about \$9,000. As well as materials, we provided school supplies and t-shirts for 168 students plus salaries for the teachers (at the modest local pay rate).
- Thanks to the Gettin' Higher Choir, Ann Mortifee, and the Moja Africa Singers, we were able to raise \$12,988 at the benefit concert held last June. Our other funds have come through individual donations.
- Funding greatly increased due to the grants of \$18,750 from CLWR for wells and \$3,400 from the Cdn High Commission for school furniture.
- The teachers can be paid until the end of 2000. We hope for further contributions to pay them in 2001.

School Needs: January to June 2001

We need to raise almost \$4,000 to keep the school running for the first half of 2001, as follows.

Teachers' salaries	\$1,800
Breakfast program	\$ 400
School supplies	\$ 800
Contact persons	\$ 450
Administration/misc	\$ <u>400</u>
Total	\$3,850

We hope that donations made at the film preview at UVic on November 25, and other contributions, will provide these funds. Please come and help us to reach this goal!

Website - We are working on "Kapasseni.com", a website providing information and pictures about the village and the project. We hope the website will be ready early in 2001. In the meantime, this newsletter can be read and downloaded from the Hope Lutheran website, at www.pacificcoast.net/~hopelutheran

The Kapasseni Project Committee

Coordinators – Perpetua and Joseph Alfazema

Treasurer – Sylvia Gledhill

Recording Secretary – Mona Achtzener

Correspondence – Doris Bergbusch

Chaplaincy and Wisdom – Pastor Mark Beiderwieden,
Vicar Matt Ziprick, Redeemer Lutheran Church.

In addition, Shivon Robinsong and Ian McLachlan have provided ongoing advice and support.

All of us are happy to donate our services as volunteers. Living in such a wealthy country, we are grateful for the opportunity to be involved in such needed and rewarding work. We also emphasise that the gifts of this work go both ways, as the travellers from Victoria have been deeply affected by the villagers' simplicity, community, and capacity for joy.

Want to Get Involved? - We would welcome any who would like to work with us on this project, including possibly coming on our next trip to Mozambique. You can contact us at 478-9571 (Perpetua Alfazema) or email kapasseni@coastnet.com. Donations can be sent to: Redeemer Lutheran Church (memo "Kapasseni Project"), 911 Jenkins Avenue, Victoria, V9B 2N8.

Woyaya – Heaven Knows Where We Are Going

On the bumpy road to Kapasseni in July 1999, when it looked like there were so many obstacles in the path, our people sang the South African song *Woyaya*, which has taken on very special meaning for us.

***We are going, Heaven knows where we are going,
But we know within.***

***And we'll get there, Heaven knows how we will get there,
But we know we will.***

It will be hard we know, And the road will be muddy and rough,

***But we'll get there, Heaven knows how we will get there,
But we know we will.***

We know that we have only managed to achieve what we have with the help of God. We have felt God's blessing and guidance many times over the last two years. This year, when many aid agencies, churches, concerned individuals and even governments are seeking to redress the wealth imbalances in this world (Jubilee 2000), we are deeply grateful to be able to reach out and support our brothers and sisters in Kapasseni. We hope you will join with us however you are moved to do so.

***Come and meet us at the Kapasseni
film preview at UVic on November 25!!***