

Intro to Care Botswana

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Preacher: Robert Cismas

[0 : 00] as we work through Care Botswana and lead the work of Care Botswana Trust. Now, a little bit about Botswana. You see where it is in relation to the African continent.

And you see, maybe you can't read on the screen, but the big district on the right is called the Central District. And then the little district further to the right is called the Northeast District. So the Northeast District is further south and further west than the Central District. I don't know who participated in the naming, but we live in the Central District, and up there is Nata.

Botswana is about the size of France, or you could fit Scotland, England, Wales, and Northern Ireland two times and a half within the land of Botswana.

And it's straddled by the Tropic of Cancer, and it's a semi-desert, which means we don't see any of the lovely rain that we get here in Scotland for months and months during the dry season.

[1 : 21] And the temperatures range very widely. It can be very cold at night, in winter, and it warms up quite a lot during the day and so on in the summer.

Predominantly, it's hot. It can get up to 45 at the highest heat, so it's quite a harsh climate. There are 2.28 million people living in the whole of Botswana, so it's populated sparsely.

Nata in our region has about 5,000 people, so there's lots of people in our area. And it's similar to the population of Namibia in that region, people who are willing to live in the desert.

And we have several language groups, several languages, many of which are not written down, and they're not alphabetized and so on.

The main one is Tswana, and it's Tswana, and it's the main language of the country in which everybody understands each other. And there are Kalanga people.

[2 : 31] Our area is a strong Kalanga area. They have a Bible, I think, but it's not hugely used in formal, in writing. Then there are some people.

We have the most sand people living in any country. There are seven different languages, also known as Bushmen. Many of them are unreached, and they don't have very little of the Bible in their languages.

And there are other people groups also living in Botswana. HIV and AIDS has affected a lot of the country of Botswana.

I think Botswana is ranked as second in the world for HIV infection. It said at the moment the infection rate, the continual infection rate is 17.6%.

What's 48.9%? That's the number of women between 30 and 34 years old who are infected by HIV. That's one in two.

[3 : 44] 24%, that's the number of... So that's a quarter of all the young people up to the age of 15 are infected with HIV. What's 33.3?

That's exactly a third. That's the number of women who are pregnant who are infected with HIV. One in three. So Nata is particularly affected.

It was one of the first areas to be discovered that it had the HIV virus, and it affected a huge amount of people. So AIDS is such a big thing.

It affects in different ways all our ministry. Our interactions with people, what happens. HIV is always in the background in many things.

And the other illnesses that come with that, people suffer from TB, hepatitis, and a lot of other diseases that come with a weak immune system or non-working immune system.

[4 : 52] I have here a video of ministry, which some of you may have already seen from maybe those of you who are on our newsletter list. But for those of you who haven't seen it yet, I'm going to play it.

It's just one minute long. It'll just give you an impression of what it's like, especially at when we do children's clubs and some practical projects that Philippa is going to talk about a bit later, just to get a flavor for what it's like.

It was made by a young person who came out with her family to Botswana to help us for a couple of weeks. Thank you.

Thank you.

Thank you. Okay.

[7 : 18] For the sake of being able to group things together and make some kind of sense in presenting the work, we grouped it in gospel outreach and practical projects.

Although it doesn't happen, we don't say today we are going to reach people with the gospel, and today we are only going to do practical. Often it goes together, one after the other, and it sort of mixes together in a lot of places where we go, that we help people practically, and we communicate, we proclaim the gospel.

Our heart is in, we have a big heart for the work of distributing the scriptures. We believe this is so important, especially in our context in Botswana, where we have many false groups that preach a false gospel, a lot of things that are not sound biblical doctrine.

And the Bible is the best way to counteract that. When people have the Bible in their hands, and when we ministered in Morwa, for a brief period, we were there a few months, we were there, we met people who started reading the Bible, and then their groups threw them out because they started asking questions, and they didn't like to be asked questions from the word of God.

So it's proving to be a blessing. We do Bible distribution in Setswana, paper and audio devices, and also I'll talk about Bible translation in the evening.

[8 : 53] Split this talk about the work into two. So I'm going to do half in the morning and half in the evening. So we distributed a lot of paper Bibles, and we sourced these audio devices which are specialist devices made for Bible listening only, where you can put the Bible, and it can be tampered with, and it charges in the sun.

And we really felt that there are a lot of people who don't have access to the word of God because they can't read. They're not in a situation when at the end of the day, when work is finished, they can sit down and read because they don't have a light, maybe.

And a lot of people who can read are semi-literate. They read if they have to, but they don't read as a practice. So we sourced these audio devices.

We were able to get 160 of them. Each of the... You see those little boxes in the picture? I don't know how obvious it is. Those two open boxes on the floor, they are of the value of 4,000 pounds. Each of those devices was 25 pounds, with everything included to come to us in Nata and open the boxes. So... But they are making a tremendous impact.

[10 : 21] If we were able to pay 4,000 pounds for just one person to be saved, would you do it? I would do it. So... Those people in the picture, they are both blind.

They live in our village. I was so surprised how many blind people we have living in Nata. We visited each one of them. We talked to them. Some of them needed some immediate help.

We did that as well. And we gave them these devices and they were over the moon. They don't have anything to listen to. I don't think we... We don't have even radio playing in...

Any kind of radio playing in Nata. There are so many stories that I could tell you. I will try and keep it brief this morning. This young man's name is Morgan. He is disabled.

He had a car accident and it smashed his knee completely. Only one of his legs was affected. And then walking like that, his other leg bends. So he is walking with...

[11 : 23] We try to look into how we can possibly help with that as well. But he came back to me with an encouraging story at some point. And he says... I said to him how...

I check with people to see are the devices still working? If you have any problems, let me know. If you need a new battery, a special battery that I can recharge, I can get that for you or whatever. And he says, no, it's working brilliantly. And we listened to it. He says, when I play, the whole family comes around and they listen. He says, my mother takes notes to take to church. They go to one of those churches.

He says, my mother takes notes so she can then look in her paper Bible and find out what we are listening to. They're all amazed to discover these things in the Word of God.

There's another lady who works a lot. She's a hard worker. She goes out to cattle post, which can be 40 kilometers in the middle of nowhere. And they stay there for weeks and look after animals and so on. He says, oh, this is brilliant because it gets dark and there's not much else you can do. [12:24] He says, oh, it charges in the sun. I don't need power to run this. Like, no. And she was over the moon. There are many other stories. This lady on the left, she says she never owned the Bible before.

She was so happy. She wasn't even on the program. She showed us where to find somebody. We were trying to find one of the blind people and to give them on our list.

And she showed us where to go. She says, oh, I never owned the Bible before. And she was so happy. We use every opportunity to preach the gospel.

And since we started the project, the building, the Karabotsana building, and all the work we've done in Nata, we started at the same time to engage with the community.

There in the middle, there's a photo of a Bible study where Stuart and Edgna were out with us and somebody took that picture of the men who started asking questions.

[13:23] Oh, what about this in the Bible? As we were building and doing stuff, how about this in the Bible and that in the Bible? And we said, well, why don't you come on Sunday? Philippa will bake a cake for us and we can find out all the answers.

And they came and that lasted for over a year. People came and went, but they were interested to hear from the Word of God. As the Word of God started challenging them, as we read through the Bible, some of them stopped coming.

But we meet them all the time. We meet them at different outreaches and pray that God continues to work in their hearts. We use the Jesus film sometimes, the Nativity story film sometimes. People come to see these films.

The Jesus film is in Setswana. And then we get the opportunity to speak to the community. People we gave Bibles to, they're also asking us, you gave us Bibles, but now we want you to come back and to teach us from those Bibles.

So looking forward to that. Philippa is going to come up and tell us a bit about the kids' ministry. So the reaching the children is something that we love to do.

[14:40] As you know, Jesus loves the children. And many of the children in our area have heartbreaking situations. And not much going on for them, really. A lot of them live in very remote areas.

Most of the children we work among would not have loving families. It's very rare to find a child in our groups who has a mother and a father there looking after them.

That is very rare. Most of them are living with extended families. Some of them in very, very difficult situations. Especially out in the more remote villages. So what we tend to do is go out into a village. We will drive out. Some of them are quite hard to get to in the bush, these villages. We go. We would speak to the chiefs and the leaders of that village and ask permission and build up a relationship there and say, can we come in and do an event for your children?

And we've been generally accepted very warmly. And then we find a place in the village where we can hold an outreach outdoors. We're blessed. There's no rain, so it's always outdoors.

[15:40] But finding someone with a bit of shade for the children to sit under. And then we would speak to the school if there's a primary school in that village. Most villages have a primary school. A lot of children come in from the bush to the primary schools.

And we would ask them and then go out and tell families we're going to do this and chat around the homes and let them know that this is happening. Then we'll go in for a week or so and do the club with them.

Very similar to what the children here are doing at Watt or at Sunday school. So we'll sing songs, learn Bible passages, Bible stories, games, treats and sweets, maybe sports, those sorts of things. But these children love it. In some places we've had the entire village come. And we have to be sensitive to their situation. The teachers in one school said, look, we want the whole school to come.

They're going to come straight from school. The teachers attended. And usually we have an adult audience as well. So they're hearing the gospel. And of course the families come and listen. And the children take the word home. But in this one club I'm thinking of, the teachers said, it has to finish well before sundown because the children walking home will be at risk from the elephants

because as the elephants come to get water, the children have to be home before they're going. [16:52] So something you don't find walking home from Sunday school here, I think. So every week we've been doing, when the Lord has enabled us, we were doing a Sunday school outdoors near our home and reaching those children regularly.

And we talked through the Bible chronologically. And these children's knowledge just grew. They had no knowledge at first. And you can pray for some of the children in that Sunday school. A lot of them have the names of animals.

Decló, the elephant. Tsepe, it's a nickname. It means antelope. You know the little antelopes that dance like this? She is exactly like that in everything. She's lots of fun. Decló is a lot of mischief. Now Pepe means the scorpion. I'm not sure how he got that name. I'm not sure I would name my child the scorpion. But these little children, they don't have much in their own lives and they have such a need for the Lord Jesus.

Many of them have prayed and want the Lord Jesus in their lives. And just pray as we go back and work more with these little ones that the Lord will be a presence.

[17:55] Throughout their lives, we leave, but Jesus remains with them and they know his truth. And they've memorized some of them quite large portions of the scriptures. So that's one aspect of the children's ministry.

Where do I point this from? There you go. So another thing we've done for the children, I love music. And some of the children in our area are from unbelievably difficult circumstances. Their mothers are involved in a form of prostitution in the trucks. And that means they're out all night. The children are uncared for, unfed, and these sort of things. The government there is trying to do things for them. And their orphans are placed with extended family.

But a lot of children don't have anyone prompting them to turn up at school and to learn what they could from the situation there. So a lot of the children will just run truant. And then once you've fallen behind in school, it's very hard to catch back up, especially if school is in Setswana and maybe your mum and dad are speaking a Bushman language.

So the truants, what we found was a lot of the little ones get discouraged and begin to think, I can't do this. And therefore, I'm not going to bother.

[19:05] I'm not worth anything. What's the point? I'll just care for the cattle anyway. So they don't take most of the opportunities they have. So I started a music group working with the teachers in the primary school to find out those children who really needed a bit of input, a bit of encouragement.

And once they start to learn music, they start to think, I can do this. And some of them are very clever, very talented, able to do these things. They just don't believe and have the confidence to know that if I do this, if I gain an education, I'll be able to go somewhere in my life.

So you can pray for the children in the joyful noise. Club, I ran a full course with them on music. And when I go back, I'm going to try and do it with a slightly older age group from, again, working with the teachers in the primary school to identify the most needy kids for that outreach.

For me, working with the women, it's been a blessing to help some of the women improve craft skills, income generating. A lot of the ladies, especially older ladies, are weaving the traditional baskets, beautiful work, and they wanted to learn new skills.

What else can we make? They asked me, do you know embroidery? Do you know these things? Now, it's not my skill. I've done a little bit, as probably most of you have with your grandparents when you're growing up. But I said, yes, we'd be happy to help with that.

[20:23] Let's do something. So I found a friend who was brilliant at crocheting down in the south of Botswana, brought her up, and we did a week of workshops with the ladies. And they got very, very good.

We had a wide range of ladies, some of the older end with little grandchildren coming with them. A lot of the old ladies would be caring for grandchildren as parents work away and so forth. And a lot of women my age and a bit older as well.

The first workshops we were looking at crocheting, another one when Bethany Tink was into dressmaking. When she came out, she helped us teach dressmaking, skirtmaking to the ladies. And they loved that. And each day, from the start, we said, you know, we're here to share Jesus with you. Every day we're going to do a talk from the Bible. And the ladies were very challenged by that.

We were able to really share the gospel. And I see these ladies all the time and just meet with them week by week. And it's really good to see the impact that's had on their hearts.

[21 : 19] And we started in Narta, but then the next one, it expanded. The ladies themselves said, we want to bring ladies from other villages. So a truck was found and ladies were brought in from very far outlying areas.

So it's really good to see that ministry. And we've got the opportunity to share with some quite important people in our community. The main chief for our area attended one of the talks I was speaking on and then stood up to express his appreciation, which he didn't need to do.

He's an important man in our region and just said to the ladies, you know, somebody cares about us and has come to share this love with us, you know, and they've asked us for nothing from it, which we were really touched by that he had understood that message.

And his sister is one of the ladies who helps me to run the craft group there. So those are some of the aspects of the ministry. And thank you again for your prayers. Thank you.

And here is something that I'm not going to talk about this morning. I'm going to show, talk more about the ministry building. Thank you so much for the interest you took in that and all your support as we were building for the past two plus years.

[22 : 36] And I'm going to talk about the disaster relief work that we did and a couple of other things. Philip already talked about the craft group.

We're going to do that in the evening service. So I just have a few prayer points there. Pray for the family as we are heading back to Botswana.

Pray for God's protection as the children are also for God's guidance and help as the children are homeschooling, all four of them now. Pray for Philippa as she is the main person involved with that. And just pray for God's continued protection over us. God was really good and he took amazing care of us while out in Botswana.

Pray for plans to continue towards church planting, establishing a core of believers in the places where they expressed interest.

[23 : 40] They want us to go back and continue teaching the Bible. Pray for the children's work, finding suitable helpers. People are able to help us on a regular basis.

Pray for the work in schools. I'm going to talk about this tonight. Pray for training local people. There are a few Christians in Nata, a couple of young ladies who have really come to grow in their relationship with God and they helped us a lot with a lot of these clubs when we needed help.

People like them to train them into doing the children's work as well. projects that we continue to, God will lead us to continue to identify the right points of involvement in our communities, working with local authorities and just praying that there will be a lasting help and a valuable help that we can bring into communities around us.

And Paul says in 2 Corinthians, you must also help us by prayer. Now, those of you who want to be involved in other ways, I've just put three things on here that I mentioned quickly.

We're raising funds for a 4x4 vehicle to be used for ministry when we go back. That's not me in that water but that was me in a different situation in Botswana.

[25 : 13] Believe it or not, the desert of Botswana floods. When you get too much rain, it floods.

And I drove in water like that up to the headlights of the 4x4 that lasted for a mile, something like a mile at that depth as the water was flowing towards everything flooded and it was flowing towards the salt pans.

Turns out salt pans are the bottom of lakes and when it rains a lot they go back into lakes. And we still need a few more regular supporters to join our support team.

There's some stewardship forms outside where there's a box and there's some leaflets as well, a prayer card and you can subscribe to prayer news. When we are in Botswana, as you know, we do practical projects from time to time.

These benefit local people and the cause of the gospel. So the only way to find out about those, when they happen, we like to start projects when we are there because we can see the real situation, what is actually happening, what would actually be helpful.

And we start the projects so the way to find out is to be on the prayer list and you can get involved directly, you know, reach out directly into that community through this, from buying Bibles to building buildings or whatever that starts with B.

[26 : 33] So we are going to turn to the word of God just now. For the sake of time, I think we are not going to sing a hymn between...