

Dear friends and family

While Arao is still with us, I thought you might enjoy a cameo of one of your Mozambican brothers.

Arao Uchio is a fairly new Christian who came to our home, along with three Zimbabwe brethren, to study with Dave. They have since returned, but Arao has remained and continues his studies. Arao's wife is to deliver another baby in a couple of weeks so Arao is preparing for his departure next week.



Arao Uchio on the right, standing with Francisco, a new Christian

Several days ago I was talking with Arao about his life in Mozambique. He and his family lived through their civil war a few years ago and it was horrifying to hear of how they had been forced to run from their village, find a place to stop, run again, and always staying one step ahead of the guerilla warfare at their back. Scrambling for food, losing family members, avoiding land mines -- well, you name it.

After peace was established, Arao crossed the border into South Africa and survived by stealing, murder, etc. Eventually he was caught and incarcerated in the maximum security prison here in Louis Trichardt. A number of years down the road, he came in contact with Dave's classes in the prison. When he was released he tried to return to his father's house in Mozambique, but he could no longer accept their ancestor worship which included his mother being a witch doctor. He got permission from the chief for his own "stand" (piece of land) and built a reed hut.

One day he phoned a friend he had made in the prison and asked for the "reverend" to contact him. The prisoner told Dave. Dave phoned Arao. Dave remembered Arao and asked could he come to Arao's village and study with him? Yes! Only after Dave arrived did he discover that Arao had actually asked for another preacher who had promised him monetary help. Arao wanted to preach. Arao wanted direction in what to preach. He took Dave to his village and there Dave was told by the villagers how amazed they were at the life changes they now saw in Arao. Arao brought out a large notebook filled with the lessons Dave had taught him in prison, telling them that THIS was the man who had changed him. Dave took it all in with a grain of salt, and made arrangements to return to study with Arao some more, emphasizing that he would not be bringing money to support Arao and his wife.

The next subsequent visits (it takes Dave two days to reach Arao's village) found Arao obedient to the gospel of Jesus Christ and many of the village insisted that Dave take time to teach them also. The church began in that place and continues to grow today, two years later.

We have grown to love this brother and admire the strength he has demonstrated, not only by the decision he made while in prison, but his determination to absorb as much as possible from the Scriptures and Dave's mind. I enjoy his ready smile, his quick offer to help me with the dishes, his love and concern for his brethren back in his home village, and his ability to adapt to this "white" home!

He asks for your prayers on his behalf and for those of his village. There are no Christians other than those he has taught. He recognizes his own situation as a babe in Christ, far from the strength of others, yet totally dependent on the Father's love and care. He knows only subsistence existence and truly values what his Saviour has offered him.