



**AFRICAN  
TEXTBOOK  
MINISTRY**

# Logistical Challenges

A few people (including one of our granddaughters) have sent mail that never arrived. We cannot be certain, but it seems that the difficulty with mail may have started with postal workers not knowing where Eswatini is. Back when the country was called Swaziland, mail was often sent to Switzerland by mistake. So the King changed the name to Eswatini. I think that the postal workers then began sending the mail to Estonia.

So I suggested that you place the words “southern Africa” on the envelope below Eswatini. That seemed to work. But then, I suspect, some may have mistakenly written “South Africa” instead of “southern Africa.” That does not work. The trouble is that while “southern Africa” indicates a region of nine independent nations, South Africa indicates the largest of those independent nations. The official name is “The Republic of South Africa” but this is commonly shortened to “South Africa.” Our post office box is in Manzini, Eswatini; but there is a city in South Africa that is also called Manzini (Manzini means “Water” in both SiSwati and SiZulu). So, we suspect, some of our mail is going to Manzini, South Africa instead of to Manzini, Eswatini. I am not sure how to deal with this difficulty. Maybe you should talk to your local Postmaster before sending a card or letter.

## **Priming the Pump Progress**

Some have asked how the “priming the pump” effort is going. In some ways it is going very well, but logistical difficulties mean that we will not see the results of that effort for about a year. Think for a moment about what needs to happen before we will see those results.

- You have given the funds for the books (that happened quickly).
- We are finding schools willing to use the books (this also happened pretty quickly).
- Now we have to find a way to get the books to the schools. That will take place more slowly.
  - The two schools in Zambia that requested books will likely receive them in a few months. Once they receive them, we hope that they will begin to use them when the next semester opens. But that might not be the case. If the courses for which the books are appropriate do not come up on the schedule immediately, the books may not be put into use for three to six months after they arrive.
  - In the case of the four schools in Nigeria that have requested books, none of those can be shipped until March and some will not ship until August. So they will not even have their books until late in 2022. The only way to get the books there more quickly would be fabulously expensive.
- The bottom line is that the books will not arrive for several months and may be not used right away. We really cannot expect to receive feedback and recommendations until this time next year at the earliest. In the long-run, we expect this effort to lead to wider distribution of the books. But we have to be patient in expecting results. It takes a long time to ship things to Africa. Then we have to leave time for a semester of teaching before the results can be reported.

## **Progress at Timbutini**

The name Timbutini means “place or village of goats.” Timbutini really lives up to its name. I have never seen a place with so many goats. As you may know, goats can climb. As we have mentioned, the church building does not yet have doors or windows. We try to block the doorways up, but we have not been able to keep the goats out. They do not go in the building often, just when there is a major thunderstorm – which lately has been a couple of days per week.

Do any of you ever complain that your place of worship smells a bit musty? Maybe you should worship with us at Timbutini some time. 😊

The problem with the goats will, we hope, be solved soon. The windows have been purchased and should be installed over the next couple of months.

We noted more important forms of progress this past Sunday. Attendance was up. We had more than 50 for the first time. But even more encouraging was to see a young man (about 25 years of age, I would guess) serving as the M.C. for the service. Previously he had never had a speaking part in the service, but this past Sunday he not only led a prayer, but was up front almost the whole time – calling on people to lead the various activities. The Timbutini church does not use the song leader system. Instead an M.C. is appointed to call on people in attendance to pray or lead a song. Those who are going to preach or serve the Lord's Supper are appointed in advance, but the M.C. lets them know when it is time. I remember a similar system being used at Sarnia, Ontario in the 1970s

### **Internet changes**

Our sponsoring church has decided to allow us a website dedicated to the African Textbook Ministry. Our new address is [www.africantextbook.com](http://www.africantextbook.com). If you have been going to the Flanders Road website and using the donate button to give to this ministry online, you will need to use this new web address. We are in the process of completely redoing the site but the donation buttons still work and will take you to the usual portal for online donations. You should have no problem but if you do please let us know immediately.

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