

Dear family in Christ,

We had just prepared a draft for our second newsletter for the year, and were finishing it off to send out, when Cyclone Kenneth hit Macomia. So please consider our Newsletter 2 a “Before” and this an “After”.

A. OUR PERSONAL EXPERIENCE

Approaching

What a blessing the internet can be. We could regularly follow the predictions of Cyclone Kenneth, at first expecting it to have a landfall at the border between Mozambique and Tanzania. Predictions then moved to Palma, a bit to the south and finally landfall was going to be at Quiterage, the village on the most Northern border of the Macomia district. We prepared as we thought best, also warning listeners on the radio to take safety measures and to harvest as much of their maize as possible and keep it safely in their homes.

On Thursday (25 April), we boarded up our windows (all glassless), secured target roofs on the premises and put away all loose items in the yard. Inside our home we put all electronic equipment into plastic bags and then into drawers, even packing up loose items into boxes and cupboards and of course favourite biscuits and goodies into watertight containers. And then we waited ...

The visitor's arrival

Thursday we woke up to an unpleasant windy and rainy day. The wind just grew stronger and stronger. By three (pm) trees were bowing down to the ground and a number of our papaya trees were already uprooted. We started off with our broadcast at 14h30. The government asked us not to stop broadcasting, but around 17h00 two of the personnel's houses roofs were blown off and fell down. We closed the broadcast soon after and Andries took the guard and presenter down to the village with the Landrover to be with their families - hoping to bring with him the two families that lost their homes. He was however unable to go down all the way as large trees were falling and blocked the road. He was not home a moment too soon, as one of the big old mango trees at the entrance of the Radio Nuru property fell over and blocked access to the premises.

Kenneth's fury

The force of the wind was unimaginable and the rain had picked up to torrents. Andries, knowing the structure of our home's roof and which measures have been taken to secure various roofs on the radio

Nuru property, knew that it was perhaps the most vulnerable at that moment of our buildings. It lifted a few centimetres at times as the strong gusts tried to rip everything loose. Ropes were thrown over main roof beams, fastened to furniture behind closed doors on the other side of the passage. He hung onto the rope for an hour or more, praying, while Sunette was mostly keeping the stream that was forming in our passage under control. The strong wind was forcing in rain between the corrugated iron sheets. One could feel the angry tugs of the wind on the rope. Tearing our solar panels partly loose and banging them violently against the roof. And it continuously picked up until some time after 7pm. Then suddenly it quietened down, and for a while all was peaceful. But we knew that it was only temporary, and we braced ourselves for the next wave which came after 20 minutes.



Kenneth's road of destruction

Herewith some official notes *'As Kenneth passed to the north of Comoros, it was packing sustained winds of around 140km per hour with significantly higher gusts. ... By 9:00 GMT, the winds around Kenneth intensified to 230-gusting-to-280km/h, making it equivalent to a category-4 hurricane.'*

Waking up in the early hours of the next morning, one lay thinking of what will be encountered in the village, and what was God's plan for us in all of this, and how privileged we were in having a roof over our heads.

B. THE IMPACT OF CYCLONE KENNETH

Facing the facts

Even in the midst of all, preciously the Lord showed us both that the next step is for Andries taking his chainsaw and starting to cut away the trees on the road. While busy with this he met the administrator of our district – scarcely two weeks in office. In the future week he would be contacting him on a daily basis, sharing plans and conveying and getting

information to pass on to others who were ready to help.

Four of the six personnel members of Radio Nuru had lost their homes. (FEBA radio already committed to pay for the reconstruction of their houses.)

Coming into town that morning people were sitting stunned, as if unable to grasp what had happened.



The only bank in the whole district of Macomia

Andries estimated that 80% of the houses in Macomia town had lost roofs or were totally destroyed. The bank and fuel station were turned into rubble. A Number of government buildings, schools, and the maternity ward of the hospital were all significantly damaged. Even the house of the administrator was not spared.

The churches with whom we liaise as well as the homes of the Pastors were destroyed as well and almost all of the believers lost their Bibles.



Arial view of Pangane area

We later heard that Kenneth had changed his predicted path, turned south to cause destruction on the island of Ibo and other surrounding islands, and had his landfall on the coast directly across Macomia. Photos confirmed that villages on the coast in the Mucojo area were totally flattened.

The continuous rain after the cyclone brought a lot of further difficulties for people without homes and places like Pemba suffered flood damage.

Radio Challenges

Our sturdy antenna was still standing, so it was only later that we discovered that the radio mast (56mm water pipe) had indeed bent under the force of the strong gusts of wind. Some of the roofing sheets of the studio had blown off and the transmitter got some water, but was not permanently damaged – what a wonder! Apart from the damage to the central electrical grid of Macomia our electric cable which connects us to the line on the main street was off as well. Although a lot has been done in town to repair the electricity, we are still without power. Although all is not in order, our ‘consulting engineer’ had given us the go ahead to start broadcasting. After a week’s absence we started our broadcasts again on Friday. Our generator now runs 6-7 hours per day to support the broadcasts. Pray that the Lord will give us wisdom in what to air during these times.

C. OUR INVOLVEMENT

Initial reaction

As soon as the road was cleared enough, three of the Radio Nuru families came to the station for shelter, where they stayed for about a week while building temporary ‘cabanas’. We then heard the stories of how people fled, seeking shelter, and how many sheltered at the preschool – filling it up until they were packed like sardines in a can.

But the body of believers reacted quickly. Soon brothers in the Niassa province were on their way, followed by a truck with 9 tons of food and plastic sheeting. Scores of people and groups wanted to link with us in getting help to victims. We were quite overwhelmed and were very thankful for the Niassa brothers’ experience and expertise in dealing with disaster relief.



Support from Lichinga

Although a drop in the bucket, the reaction of caring people remains very precious.

Local authorities asked us to take them out on the road to the coast so that a first hand assessment could be made. The main village of this coastal area

(Mucojo) is 45 km from Macomia. At more or less the 30 km mark the road became impassable. There was a hole in the road much deeper than the height of a man. The stream just a small distance from there was as deep or deeper – with rushing water fed by the constant rain which fell in the days after the cyclone. Persons on the other side painted a bleak picture – many killed and almost total destruction of the buildings.

As desperate as the situation was for the people of Macomia town and other affected villages on the main road, the plight of the coastal areas seemed worse. Plans were discussed and made to help these desperate people – and then discarded. The worst is that the cell phone towers were destroyed and communication was impossible. The people had to wait for 8 days before first help arrived. And there are still many places not reached with any help at all.

Even from before the cyclone co-missionaries from Mocimboa da Praia (North of us) promise to team up with us for emergency support to people in need. With them came others from Pemba (South of us), and then others from Marrupa (West of us).



Our team-support to Napala – 15km before Mucojo

After a few days the water subsided to such a level that people could pass on foot. One from our own team, who had family in Mucojo, also went there in this manner. The most significant of our efforts being information gathered from people who passed the barriers on foot as well as support given to the village of Napala just before the impassable spot in the road. This group was a great encouragement and support to us personally as well.

Apart from this being our first cyclone experience, it was also our first exposure to the intricate works of disaster relief. The big groups in this had much more to give, but their wheels also tended to turn slowly.

The irony is that these communities which were so hard hit by the violence the last year would perhaps be denied access to food and other support due to the same violence. Some relief groups were reluctant to enter into these areas due to the security issues. We

are not 100% sure of the outcome, but pray that the information given would calm the fears and those most in need be provided for.

Struggles upon the struggles

The struggles in trying to assist were plentiful. The 9 ton truck from our brothers in Niassa faced various difficulties along the way, arriving much later than expected. But all works out for the best under God's mighty hand. Its load could be added to that of a ship of a small Mozambican NGO and 10 days after the cyclone was by all indications the first help to arrive at the coast.

While bigger role players in the relief work were still debating if it was safe to distribute food on the coast, Nacate, a village about 12 km South of us was attacked, two persons killed and bags of maize which had been received by an independent group just cut open. The importance of working alongside local structures was highlighted by this.

The bridge at Muagamula, 10 km North of Macomia on the main route had been destroyed by the cyclone. It was a priority for authorities to reopen the road here, and after a few days the bridge was repaired – just to be broken by a heavy truck the next day. We hope that the bridge used to re-fix the bridge is not one which was allocated to the road to the coast.

Rays of light through the dark clouds

Looking at the seemingly hopeless situation around us, the Lord showed us some rays of light in the situation and reminded us that He is the living constant Hope for those who believe and that He has already conquered the darkness.

Strange as it might seem, people who have suffered so much during the last two years of violence, yet being ignored, are now under the attention of the world, and have a greater chance of getting some help.

We have built precious relationships with local government during this time.



Many small schools lost their roofs

D. THE WAY FORWARD (PLANNING)

We plan to focus our help on the coastal villages.

1. The road to the coast will be open in two-three days. A lot of smaller places must still receive any help. We promised the administrator to assist with the further distribution of **emergency help** to these communities.

2. On the **medium term**:

- With some help from believers worldwide we have an open door to get involved with a next phase – building up after the initial crises relief had been given. There are many small schools without roofing. Taking hands with other missionaries we would like to be involved with this, as it could be a precious inroad into a very closed community.
- Radio Nuru has been approached by the UN to assist in communicating with these communities. A 1000 radios have been allocated for distribution.
- Our personnel are already preparing programs on applicable topics for our current situation e.g. on cholera, basic hygiene etc.
- We would also like to distribute Bibles to believers who have lost their Bibles. Bibles can be sent to us from Maputo.
- We are also planning to distribute audio Bibles to people who are interested in listening.

3. **Medium-long term**: We would like to assist certain communities to re-establish their livelihoods. More about this later on.

E. HOW TO SUPPORT

Thank you to all have prayed with us and supported us in many other ways during this time, but your work is not done yet. Continue to pray with us.

Through FEBA Radio (SA)

Account name: FEBA **Bank and branch:** ABSA, Pretoria – Ben Swart Str. **Account number:** 4055313541 **Reference:** Cyclone K. – add your own name and phone number as well please

Through World Outreach International

Visit our website: <https://world-outreach.com/>.
Reference: Cyclone Kenneth

Through World Outreach South Africa

Account name: World Outreach SA – Mission Account **Bank and branch:** Standard Bank, Potchefstroom **Account number:**

#200656783 **Reference:** Cyclone K. – add your own name/surname as well please

Groups/ individual Practical help

Please contact us personally:

Sunette or...

Cell and Whats App: +258 87 218 7023

Andries:

Cell: + 258 84 483 6955

WhatsApp +27 81 891 1951.

God bless,
Andries and Sunette