

“May those who sow in tears reap with shouts of joy!”

Psalm 126:5

The Tear Stained Floor

8:00am, Sunday morning in Maputo, Mozambique. The Women’s Xirilo (the women’s group of the UCC in Mozambique) gathered at the Mavalane Church to welcome three new women into the Xirilo. These three women made vows to be prayerful women of God, to wear their uniforms proudly and to commit to serving the church. Rev. Maria “bloused” their stark white shirts with a new belt and a blue bow. There was much singing and dancing in celebration!



JONATHAN AND DAWN BARNES

After the sermon the Xirilo and deacons of the church came forward, bowed down on their knees and began to pray out loud together. I sat in my chair right beside where the people were bowed down. There were some people whispering to God, others shouting, some solemn, some crying, but all bowed down on both knees seeking...hoping...praying. I felt uncomfortable and humbled sitting in my chair, looking at this wonderful act of worship. I was challenged to think about my own prayer life while watching sisters and brothers in Christ pour their hearts out to God. The power of the Holy Spirit was so real, you could feel it moving and dancing among the prayers.

When this group of people quietly and solemnly returned to their benches, there, where they had prayed, was a tear stained floor. There were small puddles of tears on the floor where people had been pouring out their hearts to God. To me this was evidence - evidence of God. - evidence that the Holy Spirit was in this place. Soon those tears were dried up with the movement of feet dancing, singing and celebrating again. But the picture in my mind is still there...tears of God’s people poured out in worship and prayer.

O God, when have I last had a tear stained floor? When have I last poured out my heart to You and felt the Holy Spirit dance among my prayers? It is time...it is time!

Jonathan and Dawn Barnes serve with the Mozambique Synod of the United Congregational Church of Southern Africa, based in Maputo, Mozambique. Dawn serves as an HIV and AIDS Coordinator and Jon serves as project and development officer.

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