



I HAVE fought a good fight, I have finished my course, I have kept the faith

(2 Tim 4:6-7)

I am serving Christ when shooting a buffalo for my men or taking an observation, even if some will consider it not sufficiently, or even at all, missionary. *David Livingstone*

David Livingstone was a man of unusual spiritual fortitude and Christian character. His life spanned only sixty years (1813-1873), but Dr. Livingstone packed a lot of living and service into those sixty years. His view of the people of Africa was in complete contrast to that of the colonial governments and settlers. He treated them with the respect owed an equal – and they responded warmly to him; but Livingstone had nothing but contempt for the usual attitude of westerners toward the indigenous peoples of Africa. He got along far better with African natives than he had done with his fellow Europeans.

While in Africa, he lived a life of personal deprivation and isolation. At one point in his exploration of Africa, he disappeared from all outside communications for a period of two years. The New York Herald commissioned Henry Morton Stanley to discover the whereabouts of Dr. Livingstone in 1869. After traveling more than 700 miles into the interior of the 'Dark Continent' Stanley met up with David Livingstone on November 10, 1871. As he approached the frail Livingstone, Stanley asked, "Dr. Livingstone, I presume?" Livingstone's response to the inquiry – "Yes, and I feel thankful that I am here to welcome you." I learned of this exchange while in the sixth grade of Eastside Elementary School. I wonder at what level young people today learn of Dr. Livingstone. Stanley traveled with Livingstone for five months, and then returned to write his book on his experiences.

There was once an old friend of Livingstone's who caught up with him on one of his forays into the bush country. Dr. Livingstone made his guest comfortable as a visitor for several weeks. But there was a black porter who served meals for the group whom the visitor disdained. One day, the visitor missed a personal article from his room. When the porter came into his room, the visitor scolded him with curses and coarse

language. The porter ran from the cottage. When Livingstone found out about this exchange, he became livid with his guest. "You do not understand, friend! My porter was once one of the meanest and cruelest of all of my porters, and it has taken me many years to slowly teach him the Gospel which has born amazing results. But you have destroyed those many years of efforts with one outburst of cursing's and violent language!" Livingstone was patient with the natives, but saw no need for such patience with his fellow countrymen.

Throughout his travels in Africa, it was Livingstone's intention to open a Missionary Road, or as he called, "God's Highway" extending 1500 miles into the interior of Africa. In the process, he mapped much of Africa, discovered Victoria Falls, the Zambezi River, and interdicted much of the slave trade, which he detested and worked, with great success, to Central Africa eradicate.

About one and a half years after the departure of Henry Stanley, Dr. David Livingstone was found dead by his bedside, kneeling in prayer, in his hut of mud and straw. Word of his death, once discovered by the outside world, spread like wildfire around the world. The heart of the gallant Livingstone was buried under a Mpunda tree in the center of the African continent. Despite fears and superstitions, the natives embalmed his body and carried it the many months to the coast where they mounted a ship and returned it to England.

Livingstone was given a hero's funeral at Westminster Abbey on April 18, 1874, and a 21-gun salute. His porter who had been so rudely scolded by Livingstone's guest had to be restrained from jumping into the grave when the coffin was lowered. A wreath, given by Queen Victoria, covered his casket and was buried with it. But Livingstone's heart had been joined with the great heart of Africa where it is buried even at this day under the Mpunda tree. His epitaph reads:

Brought by faithful hands over land and sea here rests David Livingstone, missionary, traveller, philanthropist, born March 19. 1813 at Blantyre, Lancashire, died May 1, 1873 at Chitambo's Village, Ulala. For 30 years his life was spent in an unwearied effort to evangelize the native races, to explore the undiscovered secrets, to abolish the desolating slave trade, of, where with his last words he wrote, "All I can add in my solitude, is, may Heaven's rich blessing come down on every one, American, English, or Turk, who will help to heal this open sore of the world"