

Malcs News

Security Code N - No Restrictions.

After MDT 2014
Team 1

I'm not apologising for the length of this probable last newsletter to all my MDT supporters, but I am warning you that this will be a long read! I love my pictures and I know that what I am about to do goes against all the rules and regulations that Ruth explained to us during the newsletter lecture; I'm guessing that this might be used for an example of what not to do...

So without further ado

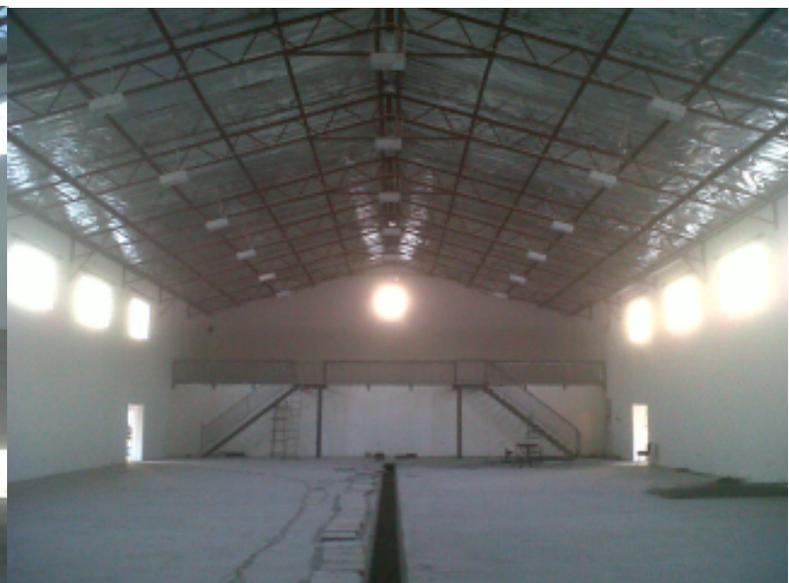
When MDT came to a close I had no certain idea as to what I would do. I did have mild thoughts about joining DM at their Hatfield office in Pretoria known as The Link. The only definite plan was for me to help setup a conference hall with audio, lighting and video for the Love Africa conference in Kabwe, Zambia.

Zambia

21 July - 5 August 2014

I was flying with Peter "Tiny" Honegger to Zambia. The plan was that the DM truck with all the needed equipment and resources would be waiting for us at the DM training base in Zambia. All the permanent infrastructure (lighting & sound) was donated used equipment. We were going to start working the day after arriving. We arrived at the Kenneth Kaunda International Airport in Lusaka at about 16:00 and were taken on a 3 hour journey to the DM training base outside the Kabwe town centre.

Unfortunately the truck was delayed at the Zambian border and it only arrived on the 23rd. While we were waiting, Peter and I inspected the hall. I had imagined a much smaller hall, so seeing the size of the hall was daunting. The electricians were busy wiring the hall lights and quite a bit still needed to be finished both inside and outside the hall.



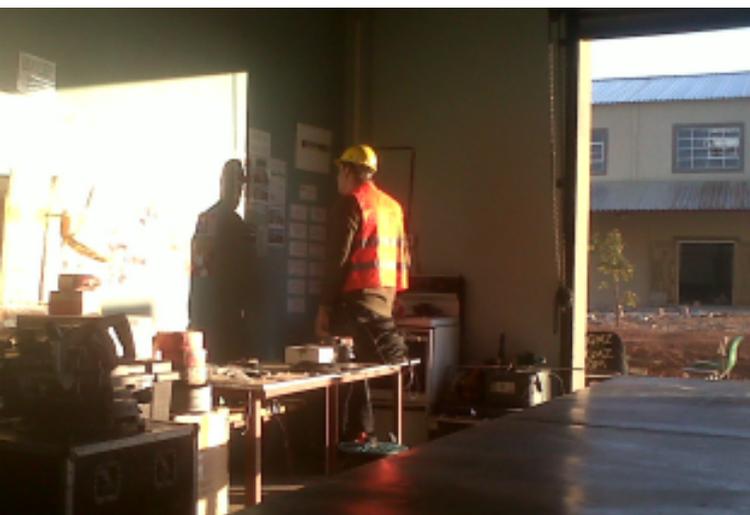
◀ Peter needed a SIM card from town and I wanted to see what Kabwe looked like if I could, especially since the bookshop opened much later that day. There was no room in the cab, but they said I could ride on the back of their truck - perfect for sight seeing! I think I came in handy when they needed to leave the truck to buy more supplies with all the recently bought goods on the back.

When we got back from town my first job was to sort the sound equipment from the lighting gear and then to put the PAR64 and Fresnel lights together in the store room of the bookshop. (I wish I thought of taking pictures.)

I was really hungry at lunch time. We were not too sure where we were meant to collect our food from, so we stood in line with the site workers. Everyone got one and a half servings. I thought that I wouldn't finish all that food - Peter took only one half serving. Lunch was really good: Nshima, green veggie and salted beans. Peter wanted to know where I was putting all the food, because I said I was still hungry after taking seconds!

Once the truck with all the resources and equipment arrived, around midday on the third day, I got started with making the cables. I had to find a suitable place to work, because the hall didn't have electricity and extension leads were in short supply.

I first chose a quiet location to work - one with little to no foot traffic and a reasonably clean floor. The first door to the left was where we spent the first few days.



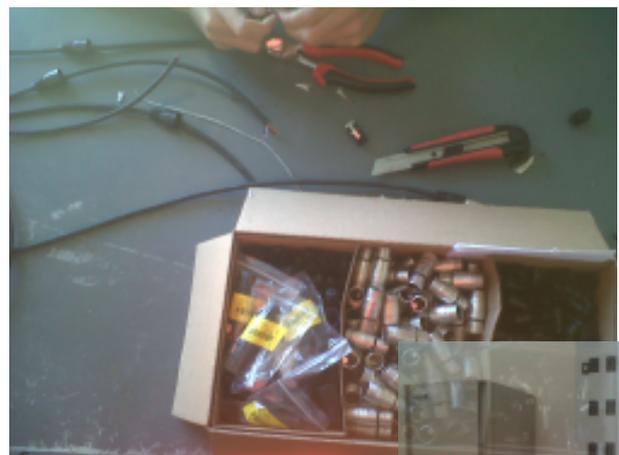
My second location was in the small hall where we ate food - I had a table next to a plug point and Peter hooked up one of the parcans so that I would have enough light to work with. Peter was looking at posters next to the table, so I took a picture of him to show you why he is known as Tiny! (there's an oven in the corner)

I got all my help from Donovan who was exceptionally helpful. When he saw my hands shaking before even taking hold of the soldering iron, he offered to take over even though he was not too good at soldering.

My soldering skills increased, but my skill at finding something to mount the connectors onto a surface so that they would not move about sadly didn't increase as much!

We would race each other to see if he could strip cables faster than I could solder them, but we both lost because Peter kept giving us more cables to make!

Donovan out-stripped me most of the time, because I'd be talking to too many people explaining what we were doing - it was not the ideal location to work from.



The lights were positioned equally on two trusses which were of the quad truss type. The small truss was not too heavy and so Peter and I hoisted it up before supper. About 30 seconds before I was able to let it go, it became real heavy. I did hurt my right arm, but I only realised that the next morning.



Someone took a sneaky picture of me - I don't know if I had just climbed up the rickety scaffolding or if I was determining that the scaffolding was too far away from the small truss?



Andrew did everything that Donovan couldn't manage, like help move the built scaffolding around the hall.

I had seen Andrew a few times on the DM training base in Pretoria during MDT - I got to know Andrew more while I was in Zambia.

Andrew (one of the gophers from Australia) thought I looked comical in my outfit at supper, so he took a picture of me dressed in reflective clothing, a harness and a hard hat. Unfortunately that photo was over exposed, so I took off the reflective orange jacket.

We only had a few days to get the hall ready for the start of the conference. The days were long and full of exciting learning and serving. When we tested a few of the lights, we noted that the wiring at the sockets were not as Peter had expected. I volunteered to rewire the sockets and it turned out to be easier than you may have expected - a thick multi-core cable is plugged into a box of eight sockets.

All I had to do was to reconfigure the wires that plugged into the box. Pictures are worth more than I can explain.

On the left is the box of sockets and on the right is the plug that I was rewiring.



Once I had rewired all three boxes, I pointed and focused the lights. I had to make do with the limited working lights, because a few of the spare PAR64 lamps were cracked in their unopened boxes.

The dimmer pack had 24 circuits and was mounted on the wall next to a custom built patch panel. The first eight circuits were dedicated to the dim-able house lights, but they could also be patched to the stage lights. The second eight circuits were not dimming, but were switched either on or off, and the last eight circuits were dimming. We expected the dimmer pack to be properly pre-configured.



The solution to the non-dimming circuits was figured out on the second morning of the conference. That morning the controller insisted that there were no circuits installed. It was totally weird, but made sense to me - the reset button could have been held for longer than necessary?

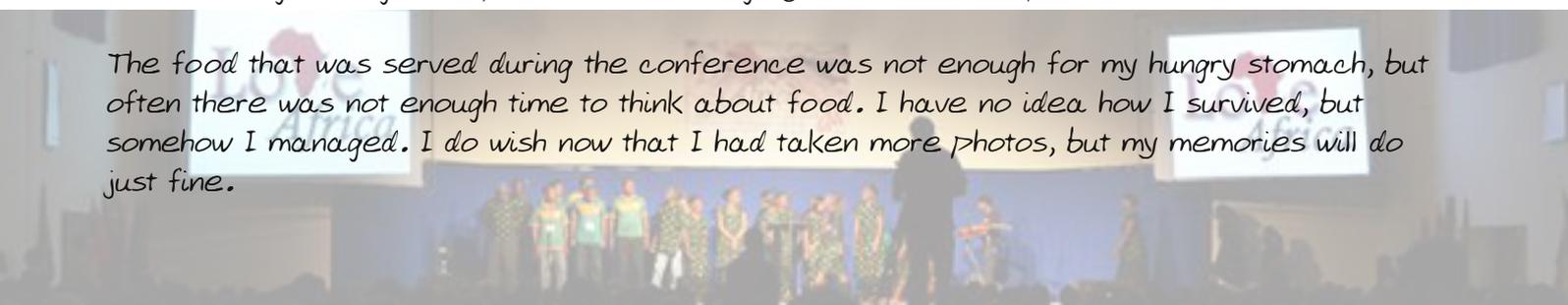
For that morning the hall lights were used. I went to the site office to do some research. After a few hours I knew what to do - I had to reset the controller to factory defaults and reconfigure the setup. I learnt why the dimmers were behaving incorrectly. The controller thought there were only eight circuits. Once I reconfigured the controller to the correct setup, all twenty four circuits behaved correctly. I also reconfigured the spare controller in case this happens again. I am glad that there are forums and kind lighting technicians around the world who could point me to the correct location to download the secret ETC installation manual.

The sound controller came on the afternoon of the day before the conference. When the sound system was tested, everyone was blown away by the power of the eight tiny speakers. The old second hand Bose Panaray system shocked everyone, even the people trying to get an early night's sleep!

I didn't know that there would be a sign [language] interpreter that needed to be seen clearly, so I had to keep the front row house lights on. I organised to point one of the stage lights down during lunch on the second day.

That evening the sign interpreter was as brightly lit as the main presenter for the sessions.

The food that was served during the conference was not enough for my hungry stomach, but often there was not enough time to think about food. I have no idea how I survived, but somehow I managed. I do wish now that I had taken more photos, but my memories will do just fine.



After Zambia

I had not written a newsletter about Zambia mainly because I had been coming to terms with the tragedy after the conference.

After I came back from Zambia, I really wanted to help OM in their audio-visual department. For this to happen I needed to request a meeting between two people who are really busy. I also needed to talk to my pastor, Riaan, about my future. I made a few attempts at seeing him, but it was weeks before I could see him due to several communication glitches.

To make things more challenging, I lost a great friend that I had made in Zambia. Donovan passed away in a motor vehicle accident. The news first came that one of the four South Africans passed away. I was beside myself for many days. I knew all four guys - three were from my MDT group.

After a long waiting period I heard the news, but it was sensitive so that meant I could not discuss it with anyone. I hope I don't have to go through those emotions in a long time.



"I could see a life on super-hot fire for missions. He always was there to lend a hand even in the most mundane tasks like stripping cables for me to solder, and being willing to try soldering himself. His joy overflowed - I have not felt that from, or seen that in a disabled person before."

I managed to visit my Australian friend who was also in the vehicle, Andrew, before he flew back home to recover further. His progress was amazing and I was just as sad as he was when I saw that the nurses had shaved his epic beard off, the one mysterious night in the hospital.

The Next Step?

Once I saw Herman and Tiny about joining DM Africa, I was really excited. I wanted to start as soon as I could, but people couldn't see my 'fire' as much as I could feel it: imagine the cartoon character Droopy, "You know what? I'm excited." (I know the line is Happy - That's why I said Imagine)

When the day came for me to finally see Riaan, I drove to the church office and walked into his office feeling really odd. There was a communication glitch with emails and SMSes that none of us could explain. God made sure that he had some time to spare and we had our meeting.

Riaan explained to me what he thought he could see, and I do believe that the Holy Spirit had quite a bit to do with what he said. I explained what had been happening and why I was medically not permitted to join the DM ship. I didn't have all the facts to share with him yet and I'm thinking that that had a huge impact on how the meeting progressed.

I needed that leadership, no matter what I felt afterwards. I'm glad I saw him that day.

I went through a depression phase in the few weeks following the meeting. Why was I enticed with a hard working ship, or given the opportunity to help rig a conference facility from the ground up, or allowed to think about working in a missions office environment? Life was so unfair in the past several months. I thought that God couldn't be real if "NO" was the answer to everything. I wanted proof besides the Bible, because I lost faith in the Bible. I didn't want people to know I was going through this, so I kept attending church and went to my cell group - I didn't want to risk people answering me instead of God. I needed proof, not a quick fix.

During one cell group meeting, we were talking about what we like about each other. Simon said that he appreciated my integrity and my honest humbleness. I drove home feeling extremely awkward. I was the exact opposite. The next cell group I attended, I came out of my bitter closet and told the group what was happening. At the exact moment that the evening ended, my phone rang. It was Heinrich. It was late and also rather odd receiving a call from my close friend who was on the Africa Trek. They got their cell phones confiscated and could only use them at specific times. I didn't tell him anything except that I was going through a difficult patch in our text messages between the two of us. Heinrich said that he had a message for me from God.

I was expecting a skype call from Raj at 22:00 and so I asked God to confirm His message to me through Raj. God confirmed what He spoke to me through Heinrich by Raj giving me the same message.

In a nutshell, God missed me and wanted me to come back to Him. I was in the middle of throwing my life out and giving up on everything.

In the next few days I spoke to a few more friends and it was suggested to me to go get re-evaluated psychologically. I'm glad I listened to that suggestion, because I discovered that the diagnosis I thought I had was not true. I won't share the details, but what I can say is that my life makes more sense now that I know what my true condition is. I have been going for weekly sessions with an Occupational Therapist (OT) to help me understand myself and others, amongst other things.

I had also expressed a keen interest in being an apprentice to a piano tuner (my grandfather was a well known piano tuner in South Africa). I went for an interview and recently completed an entrance test. Next year I shall be joining The Piano Man as an apprentice!

In The Mean Time...

I'm still thinking about missions and figured that it is worth my time to invest in myself instead of doing nothing. I'm not too sure on what I believe about me and missions, because I am still digesting things. When I know something, I'll tell the world. For now, please don't ask me or take a bunch of wild guesses.

I think that I would enjoy helping the DM audio-visual department from time to time, whenever I can.

I did manage to assist the DM audio-visual department when they provided the sound and lighting for a "Carols in the park" event in November at a park behind the Union Buildings in Pretoria. I made sure that the people on stage could still be seen once the sunlight faded. Spent a whole day there from 7am till very late at night. That's still one side of me that most people misunderstand and have in the past abused my willingness to serve in both sound and lighting at events.

And Then Some...

For those who keep telling me to do IT: simply put, I'm not interested in doing that all day. I have been waiting for God to show me how to change my career path!

I don't have the personality to be in IT support - I have never liked talking on the telephone; I have the patience, but communication is not my strong point. I also hate lying to people and I found that I had to lie too much in my previous two jobs, just so that the company would not lose clients or have to shout at me for being honest.

I started in IT being what I thought would be a simple techie position. Within a month I was assisting in creating email addresses and doing basic troubleshooting for client support. Not too long after that I found myself answering support calls. It snowballed from there. I'm a people pleaser - when asked if I enjoyed my job, I'd make sure of a happy conversation by saying that I enjoyed what I was doing.

My mother decided that I needed to visit the extended family at the Boschoek farm. I spent as much of my time as I could with my cousins, while my father spent time with his brother in Tzaneen. I managed to go for a few walks to my favourite parts of the farm.

Between graduation and visiting the family, I had been spending quality time with the friends I had made in MDT. I either visited them at the base, picked them up in the car or used Whatsapp or Skype to talk with and see them.

Since then I have been to the dentist and now have a temporary filling. This means that I cannot eat very fast or eat tough food with the left side of my mouth till 19 January 2015, not that it makes much of a difference...

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I will keep my facebook page, but not use my mailing list.

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