

Tony Copple
The Past 10 Years
2013 - 2023



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We would come to England from Canada every couple of years to see my mother and sisters (my brother Philip is also in Canada). On our 2014 trip we also visited my school, Wellington, and Oxford where I had never been before. It was fun in Oxford seeking out the rooms where CS Lewis had lived and breathing in the university atmosphere as we saw many historic locations. That year we holidayed in Williamsburg, Virginia, and watched the daily re-enactment of troops in Colonial Williamsburg.

My mother Joan had been living in a nursing home in Stroud, but on 11 January 2015 she died, and my sisters Dianne and Neesa organized her funeral. I had written a eulogy a year before, recorded it and played it to her while her mind was still fine. A day or so before the funeral I had the notion of writing a song about her and her three husbands all of whom pre-deceased her. I performed it during the social gathering after the funeral. I took time off work for a new adventure in 2016 with Laurie-Ann: May to July at missionary school with Iris Global in Pemba, Mozambique. In 1965, in HMS BERWICK, I had been on Beira Patrol, off the Pemba coast, little knowing I'd be back! Pemba was the learning part of the extraordinary course, and then in August we opted to go on outreach for practical experience in Robertson, Western Cape, South Africa. There we decided to return to South Africa in 2017 as long-term missionaries. Back in Canada I finally retired from Investors Group on 6 June 2017, giving us the rest of the year to prepare for being abroad. We found some long-term tenants for our condo and digitized our complete music collection. .



My sisters decorating Mum's coffin



Laurie-Ann always drew a crowd

As missionaries we worked with the poorest township teenagers and children and with schools bringing them the Gospel, and, as the pandemic took its grip, keeping 4 families alive with food. To see poverty where family members will steal from one another and sell for a pittance, in many cases to buy drugs is heart breaking. But among them are jewels, such as Bella, now 21, whom we have enabled to go to university despite multiple major surgeries along the way. Our time in South Africa was extended to 4 years from 3 by Covid and some serious disease. Laurie-Ann got inflammatory breast cancer and recovered from it. I was diagnosed with Mesothelioma, a cancer which in my case was likely caused by exposure to asbestos in the 1960s in RN ships. I was told by lawyers that I wouldn't qualify for any government compensation. However, as a result of correspondence with Ian McCallum about the 2023 Reunion, who told



Rolland Baker teaching



Training Bible Study leaders

me about Veterans UK, I have now received handsome compensation for my 'pain and suffering' from the MoD. Thank you, Ian! Since our return from South Africa in January 2022 we have been caregivers for Laurie-Ann's aged father in Toronto, another form of mission.