

The Kuruman experience – 16-18 July 2025

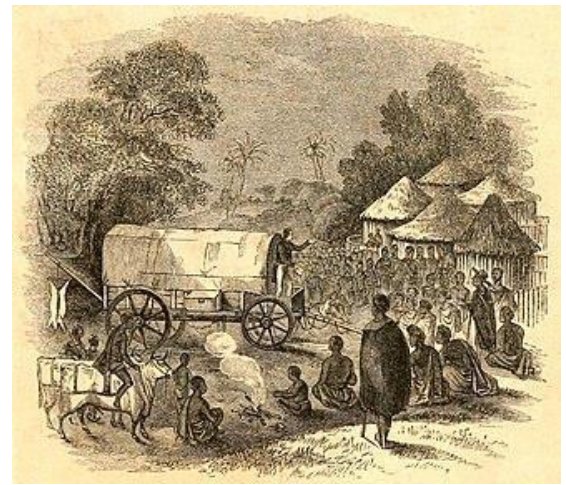
**Mission accomplished
17th July 2025**



With Rev. Johannes Stuurman of the United Congregational Church of Southern Africa at the Moffat Mission Museum – delivered 40 boxes of Afrikaans and Tshwana Bibles for the Kalahari and Namaqualand in Oom Gawie's old Nissan bakkie.

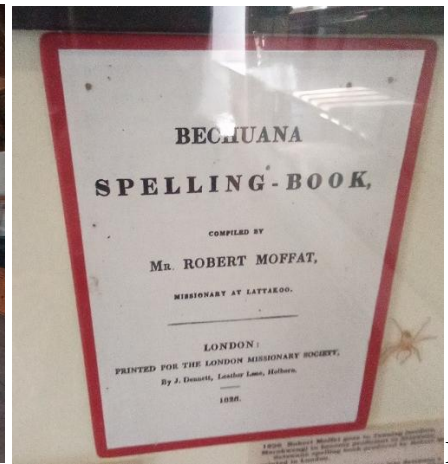
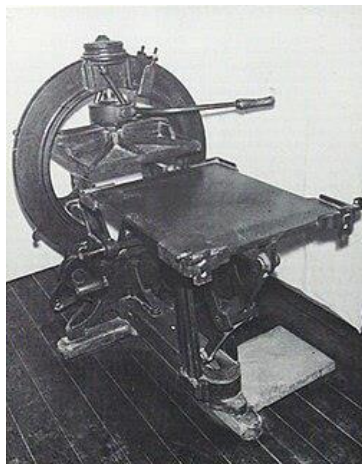
Wonderful to have undertaken this journey with 90 year old Oom Gawie Jordaan– a life-long missionary himself, he grew up in the region, went to primary school in a donkey cart from the Jordaan farm every day. As a boarder at Seodin (now Kalahari) High School, he went across to the mission station one day and bought a Bible from Humphrey Thompson, one of the last missionaries of the London Missionary Society – more than 70 years ago.

**Robert Moffat
(1795 – 1883)**



Born of devout but poor parents in Scotland, Robert Moffat left school when he was eleven, moved south to Cheshire in England. Even before this age, he had worked on a ship and also ten years as a gardener. He was however very eager to learn and kept up his study habits for a life time. After being commissioned as a missionary by the London Missionary Society, he was sent to the Cape Colony, South Africa in 1816, where his wife to be, Mary Smith, followed him three years later. At 74 in 1870, and after 54 years of African labour, Moffat stood for the last time in the Kuruman pulpit and looked over the packed congregation. From the Orange River to the Zambezi Moffat had planted the Christian faith and had left the stamp of his personality and character on the Bechuana and the Matabele.

The Bible in Setswana



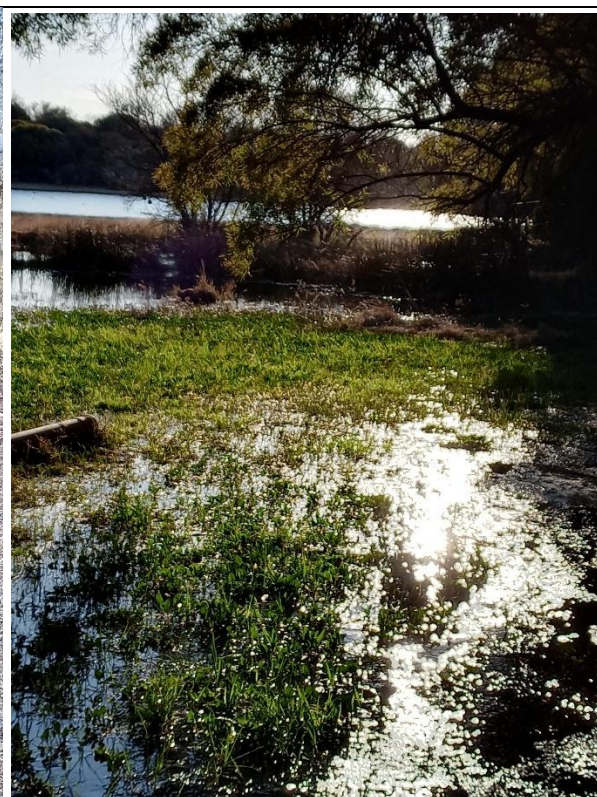
The acquisition of the Tswana language and his mastering of the technology of printing, were such major achievements for a man of Moffat's meagre education, that it is difficult for us in the 20th century to assess them at their true importance. All this was done with one specific end in mind – the spreading of the Bible to previously illiterate people, thereby influencing the mind of all men. I stood in awe of this achievement. In 1830, people already came to trade a few sheep for a printed copy of the gospel of Luke and in 1857 the complete Bible in Setswana was printed here.

David Livingstone (1813 – 1873)



A map of Africa with almost only Cape Town, Kuruman and Kolobeng indicated in the southern part – why?. David Livingstone started his journeys into Africa here in 1841 on behalf of the London Missionary Society. The Moffats became Livingstone's mentors and his future in-laws; Livingstone married their daughter Mary in 1845. Kolobeng became their mission home for some five years. The photo shows Livingstone seeing his three year old daughter for the first time after a long journey north. Mary joined her husband on his expedition to explore the Zambezi River in 1862, but died from malaria shortly afterwards. She was buried at Chupanga on the banks of the Zambezi. When he also succumbed to the fever in 1873, his loyal attendants Chuma and Susi carried his remains 1600 km to the coastal town of Bagamoyo in today's Tanzania. Here a British war ship picked them up for his final rest in Westminster Abbey in London.

**Die Oog
op Khaw**



On the way home, Oom Gawie climbed over farm gates with me (the Jordaan's family farm Khaw near Kuruman, where his parents are buried) to show me the Oog of Khaw which is linked to the Oog (fountain) in Kuruman. It brought tears of memory. Kuruman had been my favourite Water Affairs regional office for its fascinating water science and its closeness to South West.

**A Bible for
Bevin Pitzer**



This young man, Bevin Pitzer, saw the two ooms on the farm and came to open the farm gate for us so that we could drive to the family graves. He brought out the missionary spirit in Oom Gawie. At home, I immediately had to write to Rev. Stuurman in Kuruman to deliver one of the Bibles to young Bevin, who had told us "ek is in die Engelse Kerk"

**A firm
Foundation**

On the way home we stopped at the Tiger Kloof educational institution, which had grown out of the Moffat Bechuana Mission in 1904 (10 km south of Vryburg on the 'Cape to Cairo' railway line). Two presidents of the future Botswana went to school here. At the entrance gate we found this memorial inscription.

