

Zambia Newsletter

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Dear Friends,

As I write this Newsletter, we have just finished our first full week of classes. It has been a most interesting (and hectic) week. Despite promises by the builder, **the dorm** was not ready in time for school. In fact, there was no roof, electricity, or plumbing (toilets, showers, sinks)!



Our students began to arrive on Friday; but, it wasn't until Saturday, they began to install the iron roofing sheets. Because it is now starting to get cool at night, we did not feel good about housing the students in the new dorm (with no roof). Thankfully, we had not yet moved our bunk beds from the Central congregation (where the school operated last year), so we were able to house them there over the weekend. However, by Monday the number of students exceeded the 30 beds we had at Central, so we were forced to move all the students and the beds to our new dorm (where we had already positioned 30 new beds). By Monday night, one-side of the roof was covered; nevertheless, it was a cold night for the students. By Thursday night, the last of the roofing sheets were installed and we had a roof! We still, however, do not have electricity or plumbing in the dorm. It does appear that the electricity and toilets will be operational by Sat night.

Did I mention yet that the **classroom building** is still at slab level? Well, despite all this, we did start classes on time as scheduled! We positioned one class in the old, mud-brick Mapepe church building and we positioned the other classroom in the dorm cafeteria (with one-half a roof). Although somewhat noisy at times, this class continued without delay! Lorie and the kitchen staff (cooks) have been operating out of our house (and carrying the food across campus to the dorm). So, it has been an

interesting week! Nevertheless, we do have strong hopes that the dorm will be fully operational by Monday (although still without windows and doors).

Presently, as I write this Newsletter, we have enrolled a total of 42 students. We are still expecting the arrival of another 15-20 students (should arrive this weekend), giving us a total of about 60 students.

Visitors Coming to Zambia. Last week we were blessed by the visit of three elders (Smith Howell, Jerry Winstead, and Marty Brownfield) from the Goodman Oaks congregation in Southaven, MS. Even though Smith Howell is 91 years old, he was determined to visit Central Africa one more time (he has been involved with the work in Malawi for more than twenty years). Although Smith and Jerry have now gone on to Malawi, Marty has remained in order to teach 2 classes for the next 3 weeks.

Just as Marty will be leaving for the USA, we have a group coming from our sponsoring congregation in Memphis. While two will remain on campus, the others will travel with me to the north as we make plans for a medical mission trip in July of 2007. Keith Fussell will remain to teach a class on "Marriage and the Family" and Mark Taylor will stay to do some construction work around campus. Jerry Hogg (teacher from Bible college in South Africa) will also be coming this same week to teach a class at Mapepe. And, Anna Griffith will be coming to do an evening/weekend workshop on HIV/AIDS.

Then, just as these are leaving, my Dad (Parker French along with my mother) will be coming to teach a class and to participate in our July mission campaign. Lorie's Dad (Richard and Cheryl Waggoner) will be arriving in August to teach a class and assist in our September mission trips.

Past and Future Mission Efforts. The thing that makes all this work worthwhile are the reports that our past students give about the works they have been involved in. Our students planted three churches last semester; all three churches remain and have grown! But, since returning home last year, our students have planted more than 12 churches! Plans have now been made to

plant no less than six churches this summer. A recent donation has now made it possible for us to buy a 26-seater bus from South Africa (to be bought this week). This will enable us to carry students out on campaigns most every week from now through Sept. Another recent donation enabled us to buy ten bicycles which we will give to students on the weekends so they can go out in the area surrounding Mapepe to plant new churches. Of course, we also have the little Nissan pickup that Thomas uses to haul students out for ministry. As was already mentioned above, we have two major mission campaigns planned for this year (two, two-week trips that will involve every student). The students are now eager to get started!

Expansion: New Program of Study. A decision was just made to add a new program of study and a new semester to our school calendar (Jan-Apr). Our sister school (George Benson College) at Namwianga Mission to the south does a great job training school teachers for Zambia. These students must wait a year to receive their teaching certificates (after graduating in Dec). Herein is

a great opportunity. Why not use this “waiting time” to advance their training and prepare them for service to God. These graduates already have the means to support themselves in ministry, so why not train them to plant and mature churches wherever the government ends up assigning them to teach?

Consequently, in order to do this, we have developed a **new program** of study for professionals (e.g. teachers and businessmen) and church leaders who have already have full-time jobs and cannot attend our present program of study. This program is uniquely designed for Namwianga graduates and fully employed church leaders (primarily in urban areas of Zambia). This program will offer classes in the evenings and on Saturday, at satellite locations (short courses throughout the country), and during the Jan-Apr period (for Namwianga students just graduating in Dec).

This will, of course, require additional support (in order to fund these additional works), but we are confident that the Lord will provide as we are convinced these additional training efforts are greatly needed in Zambia.

Lorie's Reflections

The gentle, chilly breeze blowing across the top of the Mapepe hill caused the tall, African grasses to sway to the rhythmic strains of Bemba hymn that the Mapepe Bible College students were lifting up in praise to God. Three of the elders from the Goodman Oaks congregation were taking part in the orientation program for the 2006 school year. They had traveled to Africa to encourage the workers in God's kingdom in Zambia and Malawi. What an inspiration these three men were to the students and teachers. At the request of Bro. Howell, Marty Brownfield began to read from Acts 20.



“And now behold, I know that all of you, among whom I have been preaching the kingdom, will no longer see my face...and I now commend you to God and the word of His grace, which is able to build you up... I have showed you...you must help the weak and remember the

words of the Lord Jesus...”It is more blessed to give than receive”. When he had said these things, he knelt down and prayed with them.

Even the breeze seemed to stand still as Bro. Jerry took the cane of Bro. Howell and the three elders knelt with the students to pray. Perhaps this prayer was especially sweet coming from the heart of this precious 91



year old elder who God had allowed to come to Africa again. How tender the words Acts 20 sounded as they were spoken by Bro. Howell with such love for these young warriors in God's Kingdom. What a blessing to be led admonished by godly shepherds. Please pray for God's blessings on all of His shepherds all over the world and pray for all of the leaders that God is raising up for His kingdom. Pray for our efforts at Mapepe Bible College at we train leaders to “remember the weak and give to others”.