

Zambia Newsletter

Zambia Missions

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I trust you all had a wonderful holiday season and a good beginning to a new year. Lorie, Natasha and I will shortly head back to Zambia for the beginning of the new school year which will start Jan 7.

We are looking forward to a great **new year** at Mapepe Bible College. Last word I got was that we have nearly 40 male students and 22 female students registered for the first semester. That number will increase in May to more than 75 male students (and 22 female students). Our new women's dorm is now completed and Eness has now moved into her new house next to the dorm to begin serving as our Women's Dorm Supervisor (and co-teacher with Lorie in the program).

We now also have all our **new staff** in place (e.g. our new mission coordinators). Thomas Simubali (school director) has been working with them over the past three months (during our school break) to train them and prepare them as mentors of groups of 12 students (i.e., each Mission Coordinator will be assigned to work with 12 students as mentors in evangelism and spiritual growth).

We also have a good number of **American teachers** scheduled to teach in 2008. I've increased the number of guest teachers for this next year so as to relieve me of teaching so much. Last year I tried to teach way too many classes and it left me completely exhausted by the end of the school year. Lorie and I are now trying to establish more balance in our responsibilities and to develop more Zambians to assume more and more responsibilities. It just takes time to train and develop a good staff.

In April we will conduct our second "**Seminar in April.**" This is a one month seminar in which we invite High School teachers (who are members of the church living in mission areas of Zambia) to come to Mapepe for Bible and ministry training (in an effort to encourage and assist them in planting new churches where they are living). Last year we had 35 teachers. We are hoping to expand this to 50-60 teachers this coming April.

Agricultural Training. This will be the first year that we really are able to implement our agricultural training program and our agricultural projects (production) at Mapepe. Most of last year was devoted to development and small scale operations. We now have hired a new Zambian agricultural teacher/supervisor who will focus on training our students in farming and drip-irrigation and will oversee the farming operations of our school (which we hope to begin selling produce and chickens to help support the school). In addition, we also will continue and expand our Agricultural Workshops (for non-students). Last year we did two of these. This year we are planning to do six, one-week workshops.

Missionary Retreat. At the end of March we are planning to host a Missionary Retreat at Mapepe. There are several missionaries that are serving in several countries surrounding us in Central and Southern Africa (e.g. Malawi, Tanzania, Zimbabwe, South Africa, Mozambique, Botswana, Swaziland, etc). Our purpose for doing this is to help us American missionaries working in south of the equator in Zambia to get to know one another and to better understand the various works that we each are engaged in. Perhaps this will help us to share ideas and work together in some future, joint efforts.

Missions/Evangelism. It is our belief that this will be a most productive year yet in our church planting efforts in Lusaka and Central province. We should have our two buses in the next few weeks and we now pretty much have all our equipment/vehicles and staff members in place to support a dramatic increase in mission efforts this coming year. The only problem, however, is that I am not sure we have been successful enough in raising all the support we need to buy fuel for our mission trips. Fuel was \$7.00 per gallon when we left Zambia in Sept, with prices having gone up so much over the past 2-3 months, I am fearing that the price will now be more than \$8.00 per gallon. Lack of money to buy our fuel is the one thing that may hold us back from fulfilling our evangelistic potential this coming year.

Medical Mission. In June we will launch our second medical mission into the Central province where we are focusing our evangelistic efforts in Zambia. Last year our medical mission led to the baptism of more than 25 people and the establishment of 3 churches. Assuming we have sufficient funds to buy gas this next year so that students can engage more fully in the follow-up efforts, we are hopeful that our medical mission this year will lead to the establishment of 5-6 more churches in the Central province.

Construction and Development. There are still some remaining buildings that we are needing to build. These include a "bunk house" next to our men's dorm (which will allow us to increase our student enrollment and housing overflow students for special events at Mapepe,

e.g. Seminar in April, Agriculture Workshops, Medical Mission). We also need to build a third classroom with offices for our administration and additional teachers. And, we are needing to build some additional staff houses (very small) and two faculty houses (not very expensive to build). And, finally, I would love to replace "Jezebel" (nickname for our 2-ton, flat-bed truck that keeps breaking down).

Primary Objectives For 2008. This will be our fourth year of operations. Our first three years have required a great deal of our energy to be devoted to the starting up and building of the school. We believe we are now turning the corner this year which will allow us to really begin to apply the greater part of our energy and resources toward our mission: to advance the kingdom of God in Central Africa. We still have some Zambian staff members to train and develop (along with a few additions still to our infrastructure), but we are definitely turning a corner in our work this year which will allow us to begin fully applying our resources toward the mission of God in Zambia!

Financial Needs. It is still too early for us to determine how successful we have been in trying to raise the additional funding that we are needing for our evangelistic operations this year. We are still waiting to hear from churches that we have visited, but thus far we have only had one church to notify us of their intent to add us to their budget next year. Nevertheless, Lorie and I have done all that we could do. Since September we have not missed visiting a different congregation every Sunday morning, Sunday night and Wednesday night. We have now traveled more than 15,000 miles over the past three months and have visited more than 42 churches and still have 12 more to visit before leaving for Zambia. Most of these churches have been churches already supporting the work. Next year (Fall) when we return, Lorie and I will need to devote ourselves primarily to raising additional funding.

Family News. Our oldest daughter, Kerin, will be entering into the nursing program at Freed-Hardeman University in Jan. She has hopes to prepare herself (e.g. nursing degree) so that she can return to Zambia to work one day in an orphan care ministry. Please

keep her in your prayers as she makes this big adjustment.

Prayers. In closing, Lorie and I would really like to request your prayers for the work in Zambia. We believe this is going to be our best year yet.... but we also know that Satan lies seeking a way to destroy or sabotage our efforts. Without the help and protection of God, there is no way that we can defeat Satan in places like Central Africa where he has such a stronghold. Please pray for our health and safety that we may continue this work and please pray that the Lord will protect our staff from Satan's efforts to destroy them and create conflicts in our school relationships (as this seems to be the number one way that Satan attacks us -- through jealousy, relational conflicts, pride and division).

May the Lord bless you all with a wonderful and productive new year. Our prayers are with you as you pray for us!

Cultural Insights (part 2)

Because Africans makes no distinction between the spiritual and the secular, it is paramount that efforts to help or change Africa address both dimensions of life: spiritual and physical (secular). I tried to illustrate this point in the previous newsletter.

It is for this reason, therefore, that I have come to believe that both humanitarian and evangelistic efforts in Africa must be holistic (address both the spiritual and physical). It is worth remembering that when Jesus came to establish the kingdom on earth that his approach was holistic. Matthew's gospel devotes five chapters to defining the nature of Jesus' ministry on earth (Matt 4-9) and, lest we miss the point, Matthew begins and ends this section with a summary statement of Jesus' ministry -- telling us that Jesus went forth preaching the gospel and ministering to people's physical needs (Mt 4:23; Mt 9:35). He, then, sent his disciples out in the very next chapter telling them to do the same thing: preach the gospel and minister to people's needs (Mt 10:7-8). It seems to me, therefore, if this is how Jesus went about establishing the kingdom on earth that it is also the

way we ought also to go about advancing the kingdom of God on earth.

It is for this reason that I have come to believe that we must train leaders (missionaries) who will go forth to plant churches that make a difference in their communities both physically and spiritually. The ministry of the church must be holistic, addressing both the spiritual and physical dimensions of life.

This is why our leadership training efforts at Mapepe encompass more than just Bible teaching (which still remains central to our program). But, in addition to Bible, we are training our students with a commitment and a knowledge how to respond to a wide assortment of human needs in Africa. We are teaching them agricultural skills that they can use both to better support themselves and to teach others in their villages. We are teaching our students how to organize the church to care for widows and orphans, people dying of AIDS, and the elderly (whose children have died of AIDS and cannot help them). We are teaching our students how to organize their villages in order to start community schools in their churches. And, we are teaching them how to speak out in a holistic way in the fight against the spread of AIDS (prevention efforts that include Biblical values and address the real roots of the problem: marital relationships, intimacy, and respect for women).

It is important to understand that we are not seeking to set up large American funded programs that care for widows and orphans or provide medical care, etc. Our philosophy is that we do not want to do for Africans what Africans can do for themselves. Our mission, instead, is to train and empower Africans to do for themselves what they can do with God's blessings. Yes, we are involved in efforts to care for widows, orphans, people dying of AIDS, community schools, medical care, etc; but our involvement in these efforts are small scale and are done with the goal of training Africans to do these good works with what resources God has provided them (and with only minimal assistance from America). Our ministry is dedicated to training and empowering Africans to go out as missionaries who will plant and establish holistic ministries (churches) that bring glory and honor to God and make a difference in their communities both spiritually and physically. Anything less, I fear, would be half-baked Christianity.