

# Zambia Newsletter

## Zambia Missions

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### Summary of the Work.

It is very difficult for us to figure out exactly what the results of our work over the past six years has been. There are some things that can be easily counted and visibly seen, but there are many things that we cannot count and are not clearly visible. And, unfortunately, the things that really matter are of the latter nature: they are not easily seen, counting, or measured.

Number of Graduates. I can easily tell you that we have had 154 graduates from the first four years (and that we are just about to graduate another 72 students within the next three months bring us to a total of 226). I can also tell you that our graduates include men from every province in Zambia and several neighboring countries (e.g. Malawi, Tanzania, and Angola). I can also tell you that we have had another 200 or more students who have attended Bible classes at Mapepe (but not yet graduated from a program) and that we have trained more than 700 people in our Agriculture Workshops involving drip-irrigation & food production.

But, what I cannot quantify (measure) is the degree to which we have facilitated spiritual transformation and growth within our students. After all, we must acknowledge that it is not all that difficult to produce a graduate. What is difficult and the true measure of success is whether or not the graduate has matured into a spiritual leader capable of leading others to spiritual maturity in Christ (holy, Christ-likeness). In the end, it is not about how much one knows in his head, but how much one knows Christ in his heart; for it is out of the heart that the true character of Christ is preached. As Francis of Assisi so adequately said it, "Preach the gospel at all times, and when necessary use words." The gospel that transforms the world for God's glory is a gospel that is lived more than it is preached verbally. That is why at Mapepe I have told our staff that the most important members of our staff are not the classroom teachers but the spiritual mentors who work with the students outside of the classroom to facilitate spiritual transformation in the lives of our students. This is what is truly important in any Bible college dedicated to training church leaders and evangelists. How successful are you in the spiritual transformation and growth of the students?

But, how do we measure this? The only answer to the question, I believe, was given by Jesus when speaking of leadership he declared that it is "by their fruit" that

you will know them." Hence, the answer to our question will only be answered with the passing of time as we await to see the harvest that our graduates produce in the next 5, 10, 20, 30....100 years. And, in many ways, this will forever remain unseen awaiting that Day when the Lord reveals the quality of each man's work (3 Cor 3:13). Nevertheless, I can share with you what we are starting to see among our students, especially this past year. We are now seeing an increase in the number of times our students get together in groups to pray. We are seeing less conflict and grumbling among our students and, instead, we are seeing more love and kindness being evidenced among our students toward one another and others. We are seeing our students talking less about soccer, politics, and the lack of jobs and talking more about God's work and the spiritual needs of the African people. And, we are seeing an increase in the number of students eager to go out on our evangelistic campaigns and ministry projects.

Church Plantings. Another thing that I could tell you about are the churches that Mapepe Bible College has planted throughout Zambia as a directly result of our outreach programs (student campaigns). That number is just over 35 churches. But, what I cannot tell you much about (at this point) is about the spiritual quality of these churches. It is not difficult to plant churches in Africa; but what is difficult to plant is a church that is characterized by holiness and the love of God (demonstrated in acts of good deeds toward others). It's too early yet to determine this as we must wait to see what fruit these churches produce over time. Will they bring glory to God through their conduct and have an influence for good upon their local communities (an influence that brings a higher standard of conduct and morality among all people)?

Another thing that I cannot tell you much about has to do with how many churches our students have planted since attending Mapepe Bible College. We know that our students are planting churches, but we really can't determine how many. Because many of our students live in remote villages and because communication is so difficult (and expensive), we do not hear from many students for years at a time (sometimes never). So, how many churches have our students gone out to plant? We can only guess based on those students that we have heard from. Based on that information we are fairly certain that our students have planted at least 75 churches.

Number of Baptisms? Another question I am often asked has to do with how many baptisms we have had. This question is

even more difficult for us to answer because it is so difficult to keep track of. We can't even keep track of those our students are baptizing from their weekly outreach efforts, much less the number of baptisms that our graduates are baptizing. What we do know is our students and staff are returning every week having baptized several people. Since, we know that at least 100 churches have been planted by MBC campaigns and our former students, we can estimate that, if each new church has just 20 members (and we know many who have more), then there must have been somewhere around 2000 baptisms (if not more).

Observation. We now have about 75 churches supporting this ministry in Zambia. That means that every one of our supporting churches has now duplicated themselves through this ministry and that we are well on our way to a second round of duplication of each of our supporting churches. While we don't want to boast in accomplishments (as this is God's doing), it is something to celebrate! Recently the Christian Chronicle reported that between 2003 and 2009 (six years), there were 526 Churches of Christ in the USA that closed their doors. Most of these churches are, of course, small rural churches whose children have moved off to find jobs in the cities. Unfortunately, we are not replacing these lost churches with new church plantings. But, perhaps it should give us some encouragement to know that many of these declining rural churches have reproduced themselves throughout the world (through their strong support of missions). And, although many more will close their doors in the years to come, many of them will have reproduced themselves many times over elsewhere in the world! And, though we are saddened to see many of our rural churches die, we must rejoice in their legacy of faith and dedication to the mission of God! Just as humans live and die, so do churches. What matters is not that we live forever upon the earth. What matters is the legacy of our faith that we left behind: our children and our faith that lives on in them. I hope that as we see more of our rural churches close in the years ahead that they will dedicate the last assembly in those buildings with a celebration of their faith that has been passed on to another generation and another "tribe" somewhere else in the world. There is great cause for our rural churches to celebrate their legacy for it has been these rural churches that have sacrificed the most to advance the mission of God throughout the world over the past 50 years!

Physical Structures and Infrastructure. There is much that we can point to at Mapepe that involves buildings and vehicles (physical infrastructure). I can speak of our men's dorm building that will hold 72 students, the women's dorm that will hold 22 students, our classroom building, staff housing (six apartments, six old houses, and three senior staff houses), our new administration building (seven offices and a large conference room), six Guest Houses, two other staff offices, chicken coup, agriculture training center, auto garage, four containers (used for storage/workshops), and the Mapepe church building upon the hill. In addition, we have more than 14 vehicles that are used to support our outreach ministries (includes a bus, two trucks, two pickups, farm tractor, 4 four-wheel drive vehicles, etc). I can show you all this, but what I cannot show you are all the classes (including chapel services, devotionals, and group Bible studies) that have been conducted and all the good works and evangelism that has been done with the use of these buildings and vehicles. I can tell you about them and about some of the

results that have come from these efforts, but to do so would require several books to document. I can tell you about the many different outreach campaigns that have been conducted. I can tell you about all the afternoon outreach trips our staff and students are making almost every afternoon and on the weekends. I can tell you about the numerous ministry projects (e.g. assistance to widows and orphans) that our students have engaged in. I could tell about the 3 major medical missions we did in the Central province and the mobile medical clinic that we have started this year. I can tell you about the countless Agriculture Workshops (in which more than 700 people have been taught how to grow food year-round using drip-irrigation). I can also tell you about four different ministries we are now running to minister to children and orphans. And, I can tell you about the church workshops that we have conducted and one-week seminars on the Bible, ministry and marriage that we have done. And, then there are all kinds of other short-term projects and activities that we and our students have engaged in that have never been mentioned in our newsletters. And, I could tell you stories about how people's lives have been completely transformed or saved through all these efforts. The stories could go on and on. Part of the problem is that there are so many of these stories and we are constantly moving from one effort to the next in such rapid succession that we never seem to find the time to sit down and write up these incredible stories. I know we need to so you can be encouraged, but there is so much work to be done that it is hard to find the time to write them down.

Indigenous Leadership. There is one more success story that I want to share with you that perhaps has the greatest long-term potential. This has to do with the development of our Mapepe staff (leadership). Up until this point, much of the work at Mapepe was heavily dependent upon Lorie and I; but since Lorie and I are not permanent, our work will have no long-term benefit unless we reproduce ourselves and develop an African staff who can do what we are doing and can continue to do it long after we are gone. Many mission works have been short-lived because the missionaries did all the work and never prepared others to continue on after their departure. Hence, Lorie and I began to prepare for the day of our departure on the first day that we arrived in Zambia. Although we have no plans to leave Zambia, that day will eventually come whether we like it or not. What is essential is that we prepare for that day so that when it does come, God's work will continue on.

One of the things I am MOST happy and proud to report to you at this time is that fact that I believe we now have developed the staff and leadership necessary to continue this work should anything unexpected happened to Lorie and I so that we were no longer able to remain in Zambia. One of the most exciting things for Lorie and I to see this past year was the growth and maturity that took place in our staff. It was as if just suddenly our staff just matured and came together as harmonious unit to begin work together toward the same goals. It was as though everyone suddenly started understanding how to do this work! I cannot begin to tell you how important this to the long-term future of this work and what a relief it is for Lorie and I not to have this whole work riding on our shoulders. We now have others (both here in the USA and especially in Zambia) to help shoulder this work and carry it on to even greater heights. Thus, when it is all said and done, I must tell you that I couldn't be more positive or any more excited about where this ministry stands than I do right now! God is truly blessing this effort!!!