

Zambia Newsletter

Zambia Missions

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February 2012

I think it is obvious that we are having one of the best years ever in our ministry here in Zambia. The added manpower with the coming of Greg Swindle, Dixon & Flash Settle, and Stephen French has made a huge difference in the work here (Greg's wife, Mary, will join us in May). With their help we are now providing the kind of quality mentoring and practical training for our students that we have been dreaming of and, with Stephen taking over the administrative duties, I have been able to focus much more intently on the spiritual side of our work. Featured below are reports from Thomas Simubali, Dixon Settle, and Lorie.

Report: Mapepe Bible College.

We have 35 students enrolled in the first-year program and 15 returning students enrolled in the Missionary Training Program (MT program). Not only are we doing a better job this year with the spiritual mentoring and practical training, but we have also added two other components to our training. One of these involves the agricultural training. Although we did provide some basic agriculture training for our students in the past, we were not able to give them very much practical experience in doing agriculture. But, this year we decided we not only wanted to increase this component but we also came to the conclusion that our students needed to work in the fields to pay some on their tuition (as it is never wise to give people something valuable for nothing). This "kills two birds with one stone." By working in the fields, our students not only pay some on their tuition but they also learn agriculture in so doing.

The second thing we added this year is team building. Ministry requires relational skills and the ability to develop teams (church) that can work well together for a common purpose. Thus, we have organized our students in to groups of 6 and most everything they now do outside of class (practical ministry, agriculture, mentoring, etc.) they do as a group. This is having tremendous results.

Mission Outreach (By Thomas Simubali).

This year the Missionary Training Program has 15 students. These MT students have been divided into three groups. The Sonadi team (lead by Twambo Kubomba), the Lilayi team (lead by Dominic Kaoma) and the Chanyanya team (lead by Prize Chingobe).

Our approach this year is to model self-sustaining missions which our students will reproduce when they go back home. Key to the success of any mission is to conduct a community survey, and then engage the community by using holistic methods that are relevant to the spiritual, social and physical needs of the people.

The Sonadi Team. Sonadi, is an unplanned and semi illegal settlement just a few hundreds of meters from our college. Since this neighborhood is not recognized by any council, it has no proper structure and lacks everything that a community needs to function (sewer, water, electricity, streets, etc). Socially, it is a hiding place for criminals and other social misfits. Very few have jobs and none have any land on which to grow their food; hence, poverty is very high. Since there is nothing much happening, the residents have no hope for a better life. The young people are engaged in beer-drinking and prostitution. And, witchcraft is widely and openly practiced.

The goal of our Sonadi team is to go into this community and engage the leaders, work with the youth and provide for the old. Twambo (team leader) reports that they have already held several meetings with the community leaders and have discussed the need to setup a youth center. His team believes that there needs to be a place where the troubled youth can go and where they can discuss their needs and struggles. The team is planning to provide a platform for healthy discussions within the community about how to deal with the community's problems and they are wanting to provide a place for health activities (e.g. youth games).

The Sonadi team has already developed a "Ministry Action Plan" for the next few months to engage, work and bring people to the saving knowledge of Christ. It is only when people know God that they can "know" themselves and live lives that are worthwhile.

The Chanyanya Team. Chanyanya is a highly populated rural community about 50 miles southwest of Mapepe. The community is a combination of local people (who are mostly farmers) and people who have come from other provinces who are fishermen. The greatest feature of this community is its proximity to the Kafue River which is the second largest river in Zambia. The influx of so many outsiders and the occasional flooding of the Kafue River has brought some new challenges to this area.

The farming communities do not have good farming skills and are unable to produce enough food, much less enough to sell so that they can pay school fees or buy medicine. The fishing communities

live in make shift structures, and have no “grounded” lifestyles; thus, they drink a lot and have impacted the area negatively.

Our Chanyanya Team, is working with government agencies in setting up a community garden that will serve as a long-term training center. This center will target mostly women and the youth. “We need to bring the love of God to these people, by training them in livelihood skills. Agriculture is the only stable and simple skill that these people can learn. Fishing is not stable, as the fish are being depleted, and when they are not catching fish they are just drinking”, says Prize (team leader).

In Chanyanya, we have already planted a church at the local school, and six people were baptized. We are engaging the young people more, as generational change is critical to long-term behavioral change.

The Lilayi Team. Lilayi, is a farming community 12 miles north-east of Mapepe. Its greatest feature is the National Police College. Most of the people in this community who have jobs work for commercial farmers. Unemployment is very high; youth problems of prostitution and drug abuse are common.

In Lilayi, there is already a small church of about 20 people (mostly women) which our students have been working with since 2005. “Our goal here is to reposition the church as a serious vehicle to impact people with the love of God, better marriages and hope for a good life”, says Dominic Kaoma (team leader). “We also want to specifically engage with the youth, provide them with hope and life skills, so that they can live meaningful lives,” adds Gilbert Nyamanga (team member).

Observations By Dixon and Flash Settle.

The other afternoon as I was returning from class I observed several students throwing sticks into an avocado tree seeking its fruit. Remembering fondly my childhood days in the 40’s and 50’s, I could not resist joining their adventure. I hate to say that I spent more time than I should have in sharing that adventure with them. Retrieving fruit with sticks is not the only thing here that reminds me of my childhood – the breeze flowing thru open windows, working barefoot in the fields, walking instead of riding and many more things here that take me back. But the greatest thing is the spiritual energy that I see in the people – signs on cars and buses and in the community about God and His Son, smiles and words that portrait the peace and hope that we have in Christ and especially the activities the people are involved in. They are constantly eager to give time and energy for God’s Kingdom.

I am a retired Project Manager and have been asked to conduct project planning workshops with the students during the year. I am overwhelmed observing the spiritual energy in these students. They are up early attending devotion, two bible classes and chapel for over 4 hours in the morning. Then after lunch they spend hours in leadership learning activities and drip farming (hard farm work). They still have the energy and perseverance to attend project planning workshops at night.

The following is a list of some of the projects these groups have chosen and are working on:

1. Several groups have chosen to establish youth ministries and build buildings for children’s activities in the villages of Lilayi, Chanyanya, and Sonadi.
2. Paint the walls in the dorms and classrooms.
3. Build a volleyball/basketball area for students.
4. Establish a campus tuck shop (place to purchase needed supplies like a small grocery).
5. Create a CD of Mapepe students singing.

These projects will help the students learn leadership and project management skills that will help them when they return to their communities and take positions of leadership in their local congregations. Please continually pray for their learning experience and future growth in the Lord’s Kingdom.

Lorie’s Reflections.

I was awakened from a sound sleep the other night by the sound of continuous knocking. Still in a state of half-awake and half-asleep, I called out toward the bedroom door “come in” and then I waited but no one opened the door. Again the sound of persistent knocking came and I again called out in a louder voice “come in” but no one opened the door. A third time, the sound knocking sound came. I sat up in my bed and shouted “COME IN!” No one opened the door! By this time I was wide awake and I had also awakened David from a sound sleep. He took a deep breath in and sighed a long sigh then rolled over and fell back to sleep. I wondered if he felt a little like Samuel with all of these “voices in the night” calling out.

I returned my head to the pillow and began to think. I immediately responded when I thought that one of my children or grand-children needed me. When the knocking came again, I even raised the volume of my voice to try to meet their needs. Though they weren’t at the door, I responded even half-asleep. At that moment, a smile came across my face which was accompanied by a plethora of verses in my mind about our Father in heaven who never slumbers, gives us steadfast love, is with us when we walk through the valley, will deliver us from evil, knows the number of hairs on our head, and will be with us ever to the end of the age. I again smiled both face and heart as I thanked God for “great cloud of witnesses” who had taught me of the nature of His love. He is able! I rolled over and soon I was sleeping again. What a wonderful blessing to be a child of the Father.

P.S. I never did find out where the knocking was coming from...but I love the “midnight lessons” and am thankful for the peace that gives us understanding when our hearts are trusting in Him!

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- Pray for Little **Ryan** (one of Kerin’s Kids). His cataract surgery is scheduled for this month.
 - Pray for the **students** as they engage in new outreach ministries (e.g. Sonadi, Chanyanya, and Lilayi teams above).
 - Pray for **Greg and Mary** as Greg returns to the USA (April 1) to pack up everything and return with Mary (May 1).