

Zambia Newsletter

Zambia Missions

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New Zambian President. Just days before the American elections, Zambia conducted its own Presidential elections in order to replace President Mwanawasa who died three months ago. The former, Vice-President, Rupiah Banda, was elected as Zambia's fourth President. Although the defeated party has refused to concede and has alleged voter fraud, the election has passed without violence or very much political unrest as we have seen in many other African countries (e.g. Kenya, Zimbabwe, Congo, etc). Of course, it is too early to assess what changes President Banda will bring about or how this will affect our work in Zambia, but we pray that the new President will govern the country with honesty and integrity. We would ask that you pray for our new president of Zambia. May the Lord grant him wisdom and direction.

Travel Plans. Lorie and I have been traveling quite extensively over the past two months in an effort to raise additional support for the work in Zambia (e.g. Texas, Tennessee, Conn, and Kentucky). Due to the US economy, most churches have seen their contributions decline over the past few months and hence are not very open to considering new mission works right now. Nevertheless, we have made lots of new contacts and friends in many different churches and we are hopeful that this will eventually generate new support in the future as these churches have opportunity to support some new mission works. Lorie and I have now bought our return tickets and will depart for Zambia on January 1 to begin our new school year.

Redeeming Prostitutes. The work in Zambia continues in our absence (as we now have a capable staff in place). Thomas Simubali just recently completed another agricultural workshop in a village not far from Mapepe. However, because the participants who came were mostly women caught up in prostitution, the focus of the workshop expanded to address spiritual matters pertaining to their whole lives. Many of these women had been abused as orphans (forced into prostitution) and now have no sense of personal self-worth. Prostitution is incredibly de-humanizing and painful lifestyle. Most women caught up in this practice are living at survival level and have no way out as they must "sell themselves" to feed themselves and their children. While some are orphans forced into prostitution, others are

widows who have resorted to prostitution when their husbands died and they found themselves out on the street without any means to feed themselves or their children.

Consequently, not only did Thomas teach them how to grow food (using drip-irrigation), but he also talked to them about God's love for them and about God's vision for their lives (that God created them for something more meaningful than selling their bodies for food). In an email that Thomas wrote to me after the workshop, he expressed deep concern about how victimized and powerless these women feel. Delivering them from this oppression (sin) will not be easy.

It is our hope, however, that teaching these women how to grow food (using drip-irrigation) will empower these women with opportunities that will enable them to abandon their prostitution. As I have often said, teaching people "how to fish" is essential to the mission of God.

This illustrates how all-encompassing the problem of sin is in our world. Perhaps we in the West (who have jobs, skills, and plenty of opportunity) don't fully appreciate how sin can imprison a person. For us, sin (behavior) is considered a matter of personal choice. If you don't want to sin, then don't. You just have to discipline yourself to stop. This is easy for us to say when we have the power (resources and ability) to make such individual choices for ourselves. But, this is not so easy for many people of the world who do not have the power nor the freedom to make other choices.

In fact, it would surprise us in the West to realize that most women of the world do not have control over their own bodies (also true of most women in history). Saying "no" is not an option since saying "no" may very well mean being beaten or banished (i.e., no land to farm means no food to eat). And, once women have children, they become even more vulnerable as they must now feed their children as well as themselves. Saying "no" can also mean being divorced and sent away without your children. And, of course, saying "no" is often useless as women are forced into sex (rape).

I'm not sure how well you can grasp the predicament that many women (especially widows and orphans) in poor, undeveloped countries experience, but it is cruel and it is overpowering. Perhaps this is why the Bible talks so much about caring for widows and orphans (the most victimized and powerless members of society). For most women of

Africa, having control over their bodies (sexually) is not within their grasp as most live at the level of survival.

Perhaps this, then, illustrates why missions must be wholistic. We cannot just address the spiritual dimension – merely telling women (prostitutes) not to engage in sex outside of marriage. Most would dearly love to comply; but, this is not an realistic option for many women as they are powerless to do otherwise (trapped). If we are to solve this problem, we must also address some matters of this world (e.g. culture, economics, family, etc). To redeem women (e.g. widows, orphans, prostitutes) we must employ a wholistic approach that addresses many different facets of the problem.

First, we must (of course) address the spiritual dimension: these women need first to be redeemed by Christ (forgiven) so they can find the power to abandon this destructive way of life. This is also urgent since many of these women already have HIV-AIDS and will soon die (leaving behind children as

orphans without family to care for them; and daughters who will also fall into prostitution). [We must also seek to save these orphans from falling into the same trap].

Second, we must find ways to empower these women so that they can escape prostitution and still feed their children. Teaching them how to farm (drip-irrigation) is one great way to do this – something that also will build up their shattered self-image and reverse their sense of victimization (mindset that says “I cannot better myself”).

Third, we must address the larger culture itself that victimizes women (e.g. attitudes of men toward women, families that will sell their orphans into prostitution, sexual behavior, etc). This is a huge undertaking and not something that can be changed quickly; but we believe that the Word of God is powerful and will surely transform these societies over time as God’s kingdom advances to redeem the lost of Central Africa! -- David

Lorie’s Reflections



The gentle afternoon breeze caused the leaves to make dancing shadows on the face of Sister Emily as she sat under the spreading oak tree which had been planted at Mapepe near the time she was born (forty plus years ago). One hand was on her Bible and the other one was pointing upward toward the bows of the tree. I was standing at the door to the school kitchen some distance away just watching the scene

unfold. The young man, Gifti (her fellow student at MBC) seated beside her had been staring at and playing with the grass between his feet. Gifti glanced at Sister Emily’s face then followed her right arm with extended pointer finger up toward the branches. His gaze remained there until Emily lowered her arm and drew his attention to her Bible in the other hand then Gifti returned his eyes toward the ground as Emily continued to talk.

Emily looked away toward the school and noticed me standing there. She raised her eyebrows while tilting her head back. This is a Zambian signal to come over and join them which I did. Emily motioned for me to sit on the grass on the downhill side of them then began to explain to me that Gifti (a double orphan – already lost both parents) had just received word that his elder brother who had worked so that Gifti could finish school had passed away. At the moment Emily finished telling me those words, Gifti began to wail. Though I knew that it was not Zambian to hug, I threw my arms around Gifti and looked at Emily. Serenity was written on her face. She continued to read aloud from God’s word. “Sing to God, sing praises to His name...Father of the fatherless and protector of the widows is God in His holy habitation. God settles the solitary in a home...” Psalms 68:4-6.

Gifti began to lean back and raise his head to look toward me. “She knows, Mom. She knows”, he exclaimed. Emily herself had been a widow for several years. Her

husband was killed in a car accident only three months after their marriage and didn’t even know that he had given Emily a son. Gifti was called away by Brother Melvin Kalimashila to prepare for traveling home. Emily and I rose to escort him. After Bro. Melvin and Gifti left, Emily turned to me, smiled, and we parted.

Emily was such a blessing to many. She went into the bush areas to conduct women’s Bible studies. Even when personal crisis hit her, she never wavered. Her home in the village was robbed twice during the school year by the relatives who were caring for her son while she attended MBC. She was so cherished by all of the younger women in her dorm. If she wasn’t on campus encouraging people, you could find her sweeping the dirt floor of an elderly woman from the compound. Only a few short months later, Emily started getting very weak. It became difficult for her to come to classes but she still persevered. Two weeks before graduation, I went to the dorm room to check on my dear sister. I found her almost too weak to raise her head. As I knelt by her bed, her thin hand pulled me toward her and in a whisper asked me, “Pray for me Sis. Lorie, that God will give me strength like He did for Sampson... just one more time so I can graduate.” I did and Emily’s head fell back on her pillow.



God heard and granted Emily’s prayer. That day, with her mother looking on, Emily received her MBC diploma as well as the highest spiritual award for women graduates, *The Dorcas Award*, given to the woman who most exemplifies the true Spirit of MBC. Emily has now fallen asleep in God’s arms - the arms she has trusted for a long time.