

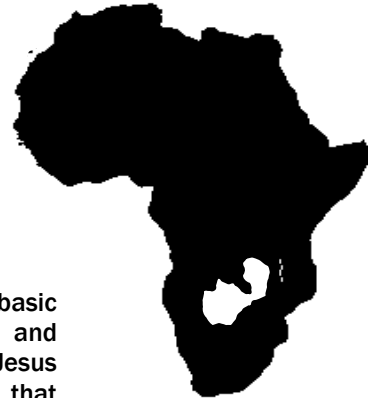
# Zambia Newsletter

Zambia Missions

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Mapepe Classes. Classes continue at Mapepe and will up until graduation day on Sept 18. We now have about 36 students. Several have had to drop out due to sickness and we have had to dismiss two students for immoral behavior (which we do not hesitate to do since our goal is quality over quantity). Over the past few weeks we have had several teachers come in from the USA: Tom Torpy (Mocksville, NC), Eddie and Carol Hendrix (Richmond, VA), Fielden & Janet Allison (Swaziland), and my parents, Parker & Joyce French (Memphis, TN). Several of our returning visiting teachers have commented that the quality of our students this year has been an improvement. And, as I will explain to many of you this Fall when I visit your congregation, we have implemented a new approach which focuses intently on developing character. In fact, the focus of this semester is "Spiritual Formation." Only those students who have demonstrated worthy character will be invited to enroll in the one-year program of study which follows (Jan).

Church Planting Efforts. This year we have introduced a new approach to planting churches that focuses on making disciples rather than on planting churches. Neither Jesus nor the New Testament instructs us to plant churches as that is something God does. What we have been told is "make disciples." You might not think there is much difference in the two, but there is. As we have discovered, it is easy to plant a church in Africa, but such churches can easily become little more than a collection of Sunday morning attendees who continue to visit the witch-doctor and live as worldly as they did before. Focusing on making disciples changes the ultimate goal from creating an institution to calling people to a life of obedience to Christ. Once disciples have been made, they naturally become a church that God creates.

Thus, this year we have introduced a new disciple-making approach that begins with a Bible Study Group (BSG). We rarely conduct individual Bible studies any more because we believe people must be part of a community of faith if true change is to occur (it is also the approach demonstrated in Acts). We begin a BSG when the participants make a promise to put into practice (obey) immediately whatever they learn from each week's Bible Study. And, with that commitment, the BSG begins studying through a series of lessons

designed to define the basic fundamentals of Christian faith and what it means to be a disciple of Jesus Christ. It has been discovered that those BSGs that are not serious about

being a disciple will loose interest and stop meeting; but those groups that continue beyond the 12<sup>th</sup> study are more than 90% likely to eventually become a church as the BSG comes to faith together and are baptized into Christ.

We currently have about 14 BSGs that have gone beyond the 12<sup>th</sup> week of study and we are confident that most all of these will soon become churches before the end of this year. There is, of course, a lot more to this approach than I have space here to explain, but this is an approach that we are most excited about and are seeing some great results from so far.

Financial Needs. Let me take a moment to update you on our financial situation (which I do about this time each year) as Lorie and I now return to the USA in order to visit supporting churches and attempt to raise additional funding.

I realize that the U.S. economy is struggling these days and that most folks have become more conservative in their spending and giving as a result. Nevertheless, we cannot let this deter or scare us from pushing forward to advance the kingdom of God. We have to believe that God will provide (although I must still communicate to people the need that exists). Our work in Zambia is almost five years old now. Much of what has been done thus far has been foundational as I believe we are now just starting to reach our stride. We have learned an awful lot at Mapepe about how to do this work and all those lessons have been incorporated into putting together a ministry that I now feel very good about. Many of you may remember me saying five years ago that we had a vision but we didn't exactly know how we were going to do it. I now feel that we are well on our way to developing a very effective strategy for advancing the kingdom of God in Zambia.

However, we do have some financial needs that need to be resolved. First, we have an urgent need to raise money to build some married student apartments. We have two dormitories that are sufficient for housing students for one or two semesters at a time; but we have now come to realize that, if we are to develop self-supporting missionaries, we are going to have to bring them and their wives to Mapepe for at least three years. Not only do we need to teach them Bible and give them practical experience in planting churches, but we also need to work with both the husband and wife and develop them both

spiritually and martially over a period of time. And, we also need to teach them some vocational skills that will enable them to support themselves in missions. We estimate that each two-room apartment will cost about \$6000 to build and we need to build about 24 of these apartments within the next year. Might you or your church be willing to contribute enough to build one (or even one-half) of one of these apartments? If so, then I would love to name that apartment after you or your church (or in memory of someone) and put a small plaque on that apartment to that effect.

There is one more financial need that we must resolve. This past year we divided our ministry at Mapepe into two parts: (a) Mapepe Bible College (which focuses on training men for church leadership and missions) and (b) Center For African Missions (which focuses on facilitating mission efforts throughout the country working with our past graduates and other church leaders). It is the latter ministry (CAM) that is now producing the large number of new church plantings. Unfortunately, however, we haven't yet raised the necessary funds that are needed to operate this new ministry adequately. We also need to raise more monthly support in to fund the new three-year, missionary training program that will increase our funding to feed and house these married students and their families.

One of my priorities this fall as we return to the USA is to raise additional funds to support these two new ministries. I also am seriously concerned that the US dollar is going to experience a major decline this next year. As in the past when there is a global recession, people throughout the world buy US dollars. This temporarily strengthens the dollar, but only until the recession eases and people begin to sell their dollars in order to reinvest in the markets. If the recession is now ending, then that means the dollar is going to weaken in the next few months - meaning our funds in Zambia will take a nose-dive. There is also very good reason to believe that the dollar will drop to even greater lows than ever before due to all the borrowing that the US has done over the past year. What's my point? There is very good reason to believe this next year is going to be a very challenging year for us at Mapepe. Please pray that the Lord will bless our efforts this Fall to raise the additional support that we need to meet these challenges. While I wish I didn't have to worry so much about finances, it is a major factor in this world we now live in. Just part of it.

**Reminder:** Be sure to sign up for our e-bulletins. Go to [www.zambiamissions.org](http://www.zambiamissions.org) and click on the link "subscribe to e-bulletins" at the bottom of the web page.

## Lorie's Reflections

An almost frantic knock came at the door. I paused before answering. The knock came again, only this time it was even louder. I opened the door to see a most precious sight. A young mother was extending her baby boy up toward me. Her face was beaming when she shared the news that her son had tested negative for HIV!

For several weeks she had been so afraid that this precious, innocent baby might be found with the virus which is slowly taking her own life. We danced with little Gideon extended up between us, his face toward heaven. I couldn't help but think about how Our Heavenly Father sees the smallest, most vulnerable and has compassion on them. This young

mother then began to cry and thank God for the formula that had been contributed for her little one since his birth.

We encounter so many parents of all ages that have concerns for their children, especially if they know of their own vulnerability because of HIV or other life stealing illnesses. It is our blessing to be the hands and arms that wrap them up in God's love for them. One can of formula costs about \$6. The average baby uses 5 per week. Only God knows the plans that He has for His little man, Gideon. Perhaps, he like Gideon of old will lead the Lord's people in Zambia. Keep Gideon and all of the vulnerable babies in your daily prayers.



*Gideon and his mother*



*Gideon*