

# Zambia Newsletter

## Zambia Missions

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**Larry Mathis.** You will remember from the last newsletter that I announced that we had someone who was teaming up with our ministry in order to help us in the raising of funds for this ministry. I was not at liberty to announce the name of this person as he was still wrapping up responsibilities with his previous job. Thus, I am now most delighted to announce to you that Larry Mathis is that man, having assumed this new role as of May 1<sup>st</sup>. I have known Larry for nearly 15 years. His ministry experience is extensive. Not only has he served as a full-time minister for several congregations, but he has also served as an adjunct teacher at Freed-Hardeman University where he continues to teach ministerial counseling. He has a Doctor of Ministry (D.Min) and two or three Masters degrees (one in non-profit business administration which will especially be helpful to us). And, for the past ten years he has served as the head of African Christian Schools Foundation which supports various schools through Africa (primarily in Nigeria). This is but a short introduction at this point. Shortly we will post a more detailed introduction on our web page (when Larry has more time to do so than he does at this moment). We are MOST thankful for Larry's decision to partner with us in this work as it will enable our ministry to grow and allow me to spend more time in Africa where I most need to be.

**Best Year Yet.** We have just begun our sixth year of operations and we are most happy to report that this is proving to be our best year yet! Our students (as a whole) are the best group we've ever had and the effectiveness of our training program now seems to have "reached its stride." It has taken time but our staff now seems to know what they are doing and are doing it well. And, most importantly, our shift in focus to "spiritual formation" has given our whole campus a new and more intense spirituality. We finished our first semester in April and just two weeks ago we welcomed an additional 41 students (who are enrolled in the semester in Spiritual Formation). This means we now have over 85 students on campus. And, what's more, we had more than 35 applicants that we had to turn down for lack of room (in fact, 8 are sleeping on the floor)! There are more people now wanting to attend our college than we can handle. So, we feel very pleased with the direction things are now heading in and truly believe we are finally "reaching our stride."

**Financial Appeal.** It is very rare that I ever make a direct appeal for financial help. I do occasionally mention certain needs that we have, but it is seldom that I make a direct request for financial assistance. This is because I don't want to "cry wolf" unless it is really necessary. But, we do have some urgent needs right now that we don't have sufficient funding to handle. Obviously with all the students that we now have, our expenses have increased quite a bit; but more problematic is the fact that we are having serious vehicle problems (repairs) that we don't have the money to cover. For example, some of our most important vehicles (needed to carry the students out for missions) are broken down and we are having to cancel scheduled mission trips out to the villages. It is tragic that we are having to cancel mission trips as these trips provide our students with the practical evangelistic experience that they need and it means that people that could be brought to Christ will not (at least for now) due to a lack of money for repairs and fuel. Thus, if any of you are in any position to send any "extra" this next month, we would be most thankful (so that we can fix up our vehicles and continue our outreach efforts).

**AIM Students.** Our six AIM interns from Sunset arrived safely this past week. They will be here for the next 18 months working with us in the ministry in a variety of different areas. We'd like to ask you to keep them in your prayers as they will be challenged in many ways by their experiences here.

**Guest Writer.** I asked John King (who just left today after being here to teach for the past two weeks) to write an article about his visit here to Zambia for this month's newsletter.

### **Reaching for an Abundant Harvest—Going for Grapes and Bananas!** (by John King)

Two weeks ago I arrived in Zambia for the first time. David and Lorie French invited me to come teach at Mapepe Bible College, two years ago when they came to visit me at my home in Murfreesboro, TN. It was good to hear about the work then, but it is even better to witness it with my own eyes. I have thoroughly enjoyed myself and want to share some insights I have gained by being here.

First, let me tell you about the students. I have spent my teaching time with thirty-seven students. Most started in January, but some have been here longer. There is a mix of ages and experiences. Three of the men are in their 50's and are obviously respected by the younger students. Most are in their twenties. All are good students. They are bright, ask great

questions and work together really well in small groups. It is obvious they highly respect the faculty staff. I have had really high expectations of them and they are living up to them.

I have asked them to focus most of these two weeks on learning to harvest people in bunches. We've noted that most of the conversions in Acts actually involved households. Using an evangelistic strategy that can duplicate those situations is proving very beneficial in much of Africa. But such an approach requires students to think differently. These students have been very willing to investigate Scriptures afresh. They passionately want to learn to harvest grapes and bananas, not just apples and oranges. It takes special people to consider that Jesus' style of discipleship might be the way to produce an abundant harvest in south-central Africa.

These two weeks have confirmed the benefits of holistic ministry. It is great to see humanitarian ministries coupled with Discovery Bible Studies. Here we are seeing the adage, "People don't care what you know until they know you care!" being lived, not just spoken. Students are going out to villages and helping people experience the richness of the kingdom of God, both by learning how to feed their families through the use of drip irrigation and discovering the character of God—the reason these ministries are being done. They are experiencing healing through medical missions as well as learning that God is the source of all healing. They are experiencing the principle of reproduction by raising fruit tree seedlings and by multiplying study groups.

As supporters you can be proud of the transitions that have been going on here over the last 2-3 years. David French is leading people here into the heart of God. He is focusing the whole campus on the importance of spiritual formation. He constantly calls the faculty, staff and student body to the important work of keeping the first and greatest commandment first. Loving God—seeking first the kingdom of God—must be priority number one.

I am so encouraged by the focus on ensuring that every student is being spiritually mentored by someone. We always need teachers who help us gain new knowledge. We always need coaches who train us in new skills. We always need mentors to help us gain greater capacities. All three of these roles are being developed on this campus. It has been my honor to spend time focused on all of these three while I have been here in Zambia.

You should know that David, Lorie and all the staff have been very transparent with me. If you choose to come you will be taken into the family and allowed to see the joy of the victories and the challenges of the struggles. You will be encouraged to use your skills, wisdom and knowledge to empower the people of Zambia to be all God created them to be. You will see that there are needs, but they are not being allowed to prevent the work from going forward. You will see great strides in equipping men and women to spread the good news. You will experience the joy of knowing that your contribution is valued by the students and the people they reach.

I want to thank the donors who have given so generously to make Mapepe Bible College and these other ministries possible. Realize that lives are being touched and God is transforming people here. You can be proud of what you are empowering here. You are partners in this work. God is using your kingdom investments here to bless people in Zambia and I really believe that he will be multiplying the benefits over in the future. Take pride in what he is doing in and through you!  
John Kenneth King, Zambia, May 19, 2010

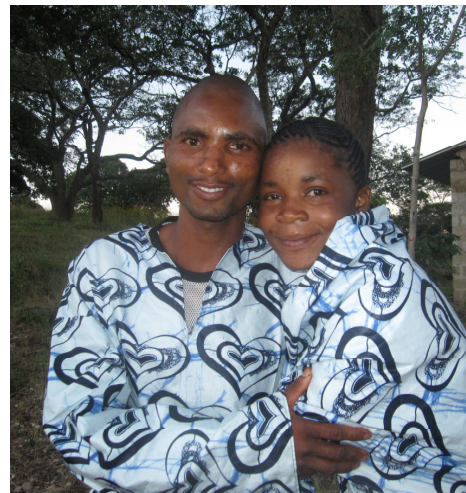
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## Lorie's Reflections

The two vehicles rushed down the highway then turned onto the dirt road. Though it has been dry season for several weeks the road still was shaped by the flood waters which had covered it only weeks before. The lowest places were still under water. I drove carefully hoping that the low riding Camry would not stall. We were making a very important trip to a village to pick up a young bride and her matron and to bring her back to our campus to take her place by her new husband, Chico (one of our staff members).

There were several traditions that had to be honored before she could go to her new home. First, a group of women from her side of the family – along with Stella, Ennis, Samuel's wife and me (to represent Chico's Mapepe family) – crowded into a very small hut so the matron could tell us what all she had taught the young bride in preparation for her marriage. A lot of questions and expectations were discussed since the couple was from different tribes. When both sides were finished the matron asked for the 2 chitenje's to cover the bride. Since she is not allowed to take anything from her village, the groom must provide her with her first coverings. She exited the hut accompanied by the matron and we got into the cars to make the trip back to Mapepe where Chico and the rest were waiting for us. When we arrived at our campus and entered the compound, we found the path lined with students and staff to welcome the new bride. We proceeded to the house which Chico had prepared for his wife. Then another tradition came into play.

The bride, still completely covered, was standing behind the matron. The bride's veil was also wrapped around the shoulders of the matron. The matron would take a few steps and stop. She wouldn't continue until a few kwacha (money) were placed in her path in appreciation for the teaching she had done to the bride about being a good wife.



Several kwacha later, she entered the door of Chico's house. The women inside the house immediately broke into song and dance. Chico's bride was home.

For one brief moment, my mind drifted from the celebrating in the small house and I imagined what an incredible scene it will be when Christ's bride, His church, enters the forever home which He has prepared for us.