

# Zambia Newsletter

## Zambia Missions

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**Very Busy Month.** So much has happened over the past month. The month began with the arrival of Richard Waggoner who is working with the "Silent Angels" orphan-care program and with "Hands of Compassion" (which is a ministry aimed at trying to save young boys convicted of stealing and sentenced to adult prisons). Richard was here for about a month and was busy reviewing and improving these two ministries as well as teaching a class here at Mapepe on "Conflict Resolution."

Next to arrive was Ty and Judy Jones, along with Richard Myers. Ty and Judy are heading up the effort to launch our new mobile medical clinic. Much of their time this year was spent visiting some local villages to conduct an optical clinic and to meet with local and district officials in an effort to establish this new ministry. Ty and Judy also converted a container (they shipped over this year with donated medical and educational materials) into a medical mission storage facility and office. And, in addition, Ty and Judy took a day or two to deliver the medical and educational materials (shipped over) to several local villages.

Richard Myers, as many of you will remember from past newsletters, has been working with us over the past few years to develop our agriculture training program. This is a ministry aimed at teaching local people how to use drip-irrigation and implement other agriculture principles to grow more food year-round (even in the dry season when nothing grows in Zambia). Besides conducting an agriculture workshop in one of the local villages, Richard also trained some of our staff members in how to use the new water drilling machine that Richard had shipped over here this year. As a result they drilled a water well in the village where they conducted the agriculture workshop. This agriculture training program has been one of the most successful things we have done and it has proven to be one of the best ways to build relationships in the local villages so that our church-planting teams can follow to plant new churches.

Mark & Debbie Powell left just as the month began. Mark was here to teach a class on Church History (a subject that we have never taught here before since we have never had anyone before who is qualified to teach this subject). So, we were very blessed to have Mark and Debbie this year and hope they will be able to return in future years to teach this class.

**Important Addition to Staff.** As our ministry here continues to expand, the administrative demands have greatly increased. And, because the focus of my ministry is on the spiritual dimension, I have wanted to hire someone qualified and capable of handling both the administrative responsibilities of the ministry (daily management, business and government responsibilities) as well as the expanding humanitarian aspects of the work (e.g. orphan-care, medical missions, agricultural development, etc). Finally, after a year-long search, we have hired a very capable man to serve as our first "Mission Superintendent." His name is Edgar Mainza. Edgar has had 16 years of government experience working with social services in Zambia and has a degree in management and social work. In his last appointment, he was serving as the District Supervisor for all the social workers in the southern province. We are most excited to have Edgar joining us as this will allow our senior staff (Thomas Simubali, Kennedy Mukuka, and myself) to focus more intently on the spiritual dimension of our ministry knowing that we have a capable man of overseeing all the daily management issues of running this ministry here in Zambia.

**Personal Burn-Out.** As I communicated to you in the April Newsletter, I have pretty much reached the point of burn-out and I am emotionally exhausted. Lorie and I have been involved in this ministry for more than six years now and it has been a heavy load (with both us working non-stop 24/7). Except for some short-term teachers, we have been the only Americans here working to establish this ministry. And, on top of all this, I have been the only one raising funds for this ministry. Basically, we have been trying to handle 4-5 full-time jobs on our own and it has left me totally exhausted.

I was sternly warned by a counselor in December not to return to Zambia this year and that I needed to take a 5 month sabbatical. Since this was not an option, I have tried to continue but in "survival mode" while trying to recruit others to join this ministry and to expand/develop our Zambian staff to handle more of the responsibilities (e.g. hiring a Mission Superintendent). We were MOST thankful when Larry Mathis agreed to join with us in this work and to focus on the fund-raising side of the ministry. And, we have had a few Americans to consider joining us here in Zambia.

Nevertheless, I have pretty much reached the limits of my endurance – I am worn out and emotionally exhausted. My productivity has greatly diminished and I am now struggling with major bouts of depression. Lorie, on the other hand, seems to be surviving much better than myself and she has

assumed more of the responsibilities this year. I guess I worry too much about finances and everything else.

In any case, I am going to need to take some time off from this ministry (get away from the burden of responsibilities) in an effort to recover so that I can continue on in this work. This isn't going to be easy as I find it very difficult to stop thinking about the problems of this ministry and how to solve them. But, I am now convinced that I've got to take a break from it all or it is going to destroy me as it is now starting to affect my mental and physical health. I do believe we have now put in place the people who can run things in my absence and perhaps it will actually be good for everyone's growth and development to "step-up to the plate" without me.

Although I am not quite sure how I am going to do this, I have decided that I am going to return to the USA this Fall for what other missionaries call a "furlough." Lorie and I have not had a furlough since we started this work as our trips back to the USA have been filled with nothing but fund-raising efforts. Thus, **I am going to try and not visit any churches this year to make reports on the work** as I have for the past six years. This, of course, scares me as I worry that some churches might lose interest in the work here, if I don't visit; but I just can't do it this year. So, I'm going to have to trust the Lord and pray that all of you will understand if I fail to visit your congregation this year. Basically, I am just going to have to "unplug" from this work for a period.

#### **Guest Writer.**

*I have asked Donnie Martin to write about his experience here at Mapepe. Donnie and his wife, Bridget, have been here for almost four weeks (teaching a class on 1-3 John) and will be heading back to the USA in a day or two. Donnie and Bridget are students at Sunset in Lubbock and are here to explore possibilities in missions.*

It is a joy to see how God is working in the lives of Zambians through Zambia Missions. The holistic approach to ministry employed by the team is affecting radical positive change in the physical and spiritual circumstances of scores of people, and the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ receives the glory. Here are a few brief observations of the work that I've seen in the 4 weeks that I've been here.

Agriculture workshops are regularly conducted, in which staff members travel to neighboring villages to share farming techniques. These workshops empower locals with sustainable agriculture practices that can be used throughout the year – even during Zambia's extended dry season when no rain falls at all. Villagers are taught to prepare their own compost, to cultivate and irrigate soil, crop selection, and general business practices for selling produce at market. The material impact is substantial, but even more meaningful are the ongoing relationships that are cultivated through these workshops. The staff thread worship and biblical principles throughout the week-long workshops, and continue to support the villagers' farming efforts after the workshops conclude. Ongoing support quickly leads to sharing God's word – in an atmosphere that is all the more effective due to the relationship established during the workshops. Indeed, it is not uncommon for villagers to ask for bible studies before the workshop is over.

Health care leaves much to be desired in Zambia, particularly in the many villages scattered between major cities like the capital, Lusaka and Livingstone, the tourist haven near Victoria Falls. The overwhelming financial support of good men and women in places outside Zambia is helping the mission team here to combat the medical issues faced here. In the past month, a container from the US was unloaded containing immediate and long-term medical supplies. Many of these items have been delivered to local hospitals and clinics to supplement their often-meager stores. Additionally, a 4-day clinic was set up to deliver on-the-spot optometric services to villagers in 4 different locales. The clinic helps to solidify the relationship of the Zambia Missions team with villagers, who are often from the same villages that are benefiting from agriculture training. As with those workshops, devotions are held before the start of the clinic, and the staff and students aid the medical missionaries, demonstrating the love of Christ in action. Locals leave these clinics with a pair of prescription or reading glasses, and a greater awareness of the Zambia Missions team. These clinics are conducted at regular intervals throughout the year.

HIV/AIDS is a scourge in Zambia, and the proof is in the many orphaned children and widows that populate this country. The Zambia Missions umbrella incorporates two vehicles for alleviating this need. First, there is the Silent Angels program that works to place orphaned children with widows. This is a much more sustainable situation than orphanages – children are not removed from their natural environment, and widows are supported by local churches and Zambia Missions staff to meet the needs of the household. Also, there is Kerin's Kids, a work aimed specifically at at-risk kids. Often in Zambia, if a mother dies in childbirth or soon after, their child will be abandoned – sometimes buried with the mother. KK aims to rescue those children, tending and caring for them through the first crucial years of life. Often the children can be safely returned to the families at this point.

Mapepe Bible College is the training arm of Zambia Missions. I had the privilege of teaching a 2-week course on the epistles of John at the school. The students are keen to absorb the word of God, and will attentively listen for hours at a time when the Bible is being taught. There are devotions every day, combining worship in both English and local dialects of Nyanja, Bemba, and Tonga. It is an awesome experience to worship God with such dedicated Christians, even when the language is not understood. The students receive a curriculum of study that incorporates teaching directly from the text of the books of the Bible, biblical topics such as Spiritual Formation and Disciplines, and practical ministry training. Students live on the compound and spend part of their weekends in sharing the gospel in local villages, with which I was also pleased to be involved. The students also travel to local congregations to minister, when not worshipping with the Mapepe church, which meets on campus.

In just under a month, I have seen so much good that is being done here in Zambia. It is hard to capture it all in such a short space. I rejoice in what I have been privileged to see, and I am confident in God that the work of His kingdom will continue here, to the glory of His name. – Donnie

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