

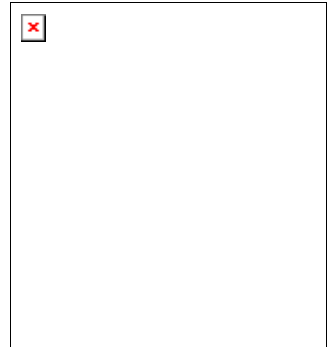
Zambia Newsletter

May 2005

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Dear Friends,

Finally! The Mapepe Bible College is now a reality! Students began arriving this past week and we began classes today (May 16). We have over 30 students who will be staying with us for the next four months. The first two classes are "Biblical Interpretation" and "Spiritual Formation." I am teaching the first class and Thomas Simubali will be teaching the second. Classes meet each day for 3 hours and will do so for the next three week. After this first term, we will begin the next three-week term on "Genesis" (that I will teach) and "Spiritual Formation" (which Doug Reeves from the USA will teach).

Hectic Preparations.

This past few weeks have been a most intense month involving efforts to make the facilities at the Central congregation ready for school. These efforts involved things such as: construction of a shower facility and a kitchen facility (furnished with stoves, utensils, appliances, etc), completion of the toilets and septic tank system, construction of desks/chairs and bunk-beds for 30 students (plus mattresses, bed sheets, blankets), installation of a blackboard, and setting up an office (desks, chairs, and supplies). I never imagined there would be so many details to starting up a school!

Even as students began to arrive, it became clear that there are many bugs yet to be ironed out. Most of our remaining difficulties have to do with feeding so many students each day. Perhaps this wouldn't be so difficult if we were in the USA, but you must realize that everything here has to be prepared from "scratch"! And, this takes lots and lots of time. It took the cook 5 hours to prepare the first lunch (ended up becoming supper). Lorie and our girls have been quite busy working in these operations.

Nevertheless, progress is being made and we are well on our way to making this first year a major success! Our students include 12 leaders from the Luapula Province, 5 from Angola, 1 from the Congo, 7 from the Central and Northern provinces (where churches are so few), and five from Lusaka (who are commuting to classes each day). All can speak English, have between 9 to 12 years of education and are over 30 years of age.

Financial Difficulties.

No school begins without financial difficulties, but ours are somewhat more challenging. Our original plan was that we would raise enough support to cover our own personal support (which we did) and that Sunset School of Preaching would provide funding for the school (Mapepe Bible College). Unfortunately, Sunset was unable to secure the funding

that they had hoped to have provided (for whatever reasons, contributions to missions have fall sharply since 9-11 and this has left Sunset facing some serious budget deficits).

Consequently, this left us with just three choices: (a) return to the USA to raise support for the school, (b) delay the beginning of the school indefinitely (and just work with churches through seminars), or (c) borrow the money. The first two options were not acceptable. Lorie and I came to Zambia to start a school and that is what we promised everyone last year when we went out raising money to come to Zambia. Thus, the only option was to make do with what we had and to borrow what we had to have to start the school this year as we promised.

Consequently, we have tried to operate as conser-vatively as we could and to divert as much of our personal income toward the school. We also devised ways to cut costs and to improvise. And, finally, we borrowed what money we had to have (about \$12,000). Patrick Kawinga (Zambian brother who is doing all our construction work) also detonated his all profits and has even taken a loss of about \$4000.

Considering this financial situation, Lorie and I will have to return to the USA after this school year is completed (during the rainy-season break) to begin raising support for the school. We will, of course, have to return back to Zambia early in 2006 in order to begin classes again for next year. Raising support is certainly NOT easy these days and it is the one thing about mission work that I enjoy the least! However, the work here will not achieve its objectives if someone does not raise the support and, it appears that Lorie and I are the only ones left to do this chore.

New Zambian Board for MBC.

One of our long-term objectives for the school at Mapepe (MBC) is to develop indigenous leadership who can serve as teachers in the school and who can assume responsibility for the running of the school. Part of this goal has now been realized, far ahead of schedule! In the past two months the Zambian Board of Trustees (who own the land at Mapepe) decided to form a Board of Directors to oversee and direct the future of MBC. This new board contains six of the best leaders in the church in Zambia.

I could not be more pleased with this new development as it now makes Zambians responsible for their own welfare (a sign of maturity and less dependence on Americans). This means that we are now working in partnership with Zambians rather than “doing it all for them.” It means that our school is now an independent, Zambian school (working in partnership with Americans to accomplish what is primarily an African responsibility: the evangelization of Zambia and Central Africa).

Death Strikes MBC Staff.

On May 1st we employed three men to serve on the staff at Mapepe Bible College (MBC). In last month's Newsletter, I gave you an introduction to Thomas Simubali (Assistant-Director and Teacher) and Agripah Mambwe (school cook). We also had to employ a Night Security Guard at the school since we were unable to build a security wall around the school the school this year.

Ironically, Thomas' six-month old daughter became seriously sick on the very first day Thomas began working for the school. The baby had to be hospitalized and was put into intensive care for the next ten days. We thought the child was getting better, but then she suddenly took a turn for the worst and died suddenly on May 10th. Two days later we accompanied Thomas and his wife to bury the child in the Lusaka Cemetery.

The very next day our Night Security Guard came to inform us that his son had just died. As is the custom for employers in Zambia (and as we did for Thomas) we paid for the coffin, rental of a truck (transport for people to cemetery for burial, 50 Kg of mealie-meal (ground corn -- primary staple food), some greens (rape/collard greens), and K50,000 (cash). The total cost comes to about \$120 USD.

It certainly has felt as though we have been under attack from Satan this past week. Perhaps Satan is not happy about our efforts to start this school in Zambia (his backyard) dedicated to training evangelist to carry the gospel into northern Zambia, the Congo and Angola. These are certainly not the only difficulties that we have encountered this past week. I could itemize a long list of unexpected problems that have arisen this past week (but space will not permit). It has been a most difficult week for us. But, we are NOT discouraged at all. Tired? Yes. But, discouraged? No, not one bit. It is in this regard that I think of Paul's words in 2 Cor 4:7-12.

Neither Lorie or I are at all surprised that Satan should seek to discourage and attack us where it hurts most. We are engaged in nothing less than a spiritual war (Eph 6) in which the stakes are much more serious than any human war.

Lorie and I remember very well what it was like for us in Kenya 20 years ago and how Satan attacked us where we were weakest. He attacked our marriage, our son (who got very sick), and he attacked our team in Kenya. This time our marriage is no longer our weak point, but one of our greatest strengths. Thus, Satan will hunt for something else and it will no doubt hurt.

Lorie and I have long believed that anytime someone attempts to do something positive for the glory of God or in advancing the borders of the kingdom, they will (in so doing) gain the attention of Satan (kingdom of darkness) and will consequently fall under His attack. And, when Satan attacks, he attacks where we are most vulnerable (clinks in our amour). Why would Satan attack our work? Because Africa is his backyard. Although many profess to be Christian, that faith is still extremely superficial. Witchcraft and the fear of evil spirits still dominate the heart and soul of Africans. Although Lusaka, for example, looks like a modern city to some extent, it is still an Africa dominated by the old ways. Witch-doctors now even post signs advertising their services (you can see them when you drive into the poverty-stricken suburbs of Lusaka). To the north of us is an Africa that is still very much ruled and dominated by the kingdom of darkness. And, this is the Africa we want to train leaders to go as missionaries. Should we be surprised that Satan should work against us?

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