

Zambia Newsletter

Zambia Missions

1910 Sycamore View Rd
Memphis, TN 38134
(901) 372-1874

Web: www.zambiamissions.org

David & Lorie French

P.O. Box 36893
Lusaka, Zambia
dfrench@zambiamissions.org

Nov 2007



Lorie and I are still in the USA and are continuing our efforts to visit those already supporting the work and to raise additional funds. Thomas Simubali (School Director in Zambia) reports that things continue to go well in Zambia in our absence. Although this is for us our "summer break", the work does not stop in Zambia. Our Mission Coordinators continue to work with those churches that our students have planted over the past three years (about 13 churches). We have six interns who are living in the villages where we planted six churches this past year in an effort to stabilize those churches. An intern is a graduate of our program who is given just enough money for food to survive and is assigned to a new church planting for six months to ensure that the church stabilizes and does not die while our school is on "summer break."

Thomas also reports that he has just about finished his efforts to recruit students for next semester. Our number will increase another 15-20 this coming January as we have now finished our Women's Dorm and can now begin our women's program in earnest (which Lorie and Eness will be overseeing/teaching). Lorie and I will, of course, be heading back to Zambia in January just in time to begin our classes for the next school year.

Financial Status for 2007

As the work increases each year, so does the demand for additional support. Our hope, of course, is that as the work begins to reach its full potential, the demands for increased support each year will begin to lessen as we reach an even stride. We are also struggling with a declining dollar. Each time the Federal Reserve lowers interests rates, the dollar drops in value. And, with the continuing mortgage crisis in this country (and

the increase national debt), we don't expect this to change any time soon.

Basically, we now have enough support to operate the school and pay our staff. What we are lacking is sufficient support to fund our mission campaigns. Our desire is to send out six teams of 12 students each weekend on mission trips to plant and mature churches. Each semester we conduct two, two-week mission campaigns that usually result in the planting of a new church. Our primary church-planting campaign is conducted in unison with our Medical Mission in June. Thereafter our students are making trips to do evangelism and to mature these new churches.

Unfortunately, last year there were many weekends when I had to cancel planned trips because we just didn't have the money for fuel and food. With fuel now being over \$7.00 per gallon, the cost for our mission trips is quite expensive. This is why Lorie and I are working so hard right now to raise additional funds. Having to cancel trips to do evangelism is extremely heart-breaking for me because it means our efforts to advance the kingdom in Zambia are being delayed and frustrated by oil prices! What new funds we are raising now will go directly to these mission efforts.

Cultural Insights

Witchcraft and the belief in demons, witches, and black magic is still very strong in Zambia. Although many have been educated about the science of diseases (like AIDS and malaria), most all people continue to believe that the real cause for sickness and misfortune is spiritual in nature (evil spirits or cursed by the power of a witchdoctor). While many might accept that AIDS can be passed on through sexual relations, few believe that is the actual cause. Two men can sleep with the same infected woman, one gets the virus and

one does not. Why? For most in Zambia the answer has to do with the spiritual powers that control our lives. It should not be surprising, then, that many believe that AIDS can be cured by spiritual power. Many Zambians believe there are some witchdoctors who have the power to cure AIDS. And, there are many other opinions about how one might be cured of AIDS. Perhaps the worst idea is the belief that sex with a young virgin will cure one of AIDS. Not only does this not cure people of the virus, but it only ends up infecting 10-12 year old girls with the virus (rape).

Perhaps you can understand, then, why western (secular/humanitarian) efforts to fight the spread of AIDS in Africa are not working. How can secular solutions solve the problem when they don't address the spiritual worldview of the people they are trying to educate. Science does not overthrow and replace these pre-existing beliefs; instead, new scientific information simply becomes re-interpreted into their spiritual context (contextualized).

It is my strong belief that any effort to help Africa MUST address the spiritual dimension of their world. Africans are extremely spiritual people. Secular approaches just don't make sense in a place like Africa. This is why many Africans will go to the western-trained doctor to get medicine (simply because it is effective in treating the symptoms) and, then, go to the witchdoctor to treat the "real" (spiritual) causes of their sickness.

Well, just as secular approach make no sense, neither do approaches that are purely spiritual in nature. Africans do not share our secular-spiritual dichotomy. For them the spiritual and physical are one and inter-related. Thus, what happens in

the spiritual dimension effects the physical life of men on earth and spiritual activity that does not effect the physical realm is regarded as spiritually impotent. This is one of the reasons why Africans have been so open to the religion of the white man – because the white man is so powerful and blessed, his spiritual rituals (religion) must be powerful. I believe this is one reason why those churches that preach the “health, wealth, and success gospel” have grown so fast among African and animistic peoples of the world. It fits their worldview: do what makes God happy and God will bless you.

This is why I believe that we must seek to employ holistic approaches in plant-and maturing churches in Africa. We must address both the spiritual and physical lives of people. While 85% of Zambians today profess to be Christian, less than half that number are active in any church. Why? There are several reasons for this, but one main reason has to do with the fact that they have not seen Christianity make any

difference in their physical lives. And, there are many reasons for this as well. It may be because the “health, wealth, and success” gospel didn’t deliver any results. They are still just as poor as ever. It may be that the church they went to didn’t effectively teach them the Christian way of life (e.g. honesty, fidelity, work ethic, etc) and hence there was and could not be any “newness of life” without a changed life (Rom 6:1-7). Without results many have become discouraged with Christianity. While it is true, “We walk by faith, not by sight,” Christian faith does change our lives on earth. If it doesn’t then it is powerless. This change may not be evident in “health, wealth, and success”, but it should be manifested in some way in this world and in the lives of those who “trust and obey.”

This is why I believe our message and our approach must be holistic, especially in Africa. We must address the “whole” of human life and bring about a full and complete trans-

formation of converts. This is why “false teaching” and half-baked churches (left immature) are so dangerous to the spread of Christian faith in the world. When new converts are left immature and not mentored toward full maturity in Christ, then the result is disappointment with Christianity. Immaturity does not bring about a fully transformed life (new way of living and thinking) and without that, Christian faith will be a faith without power to change the whole of a person’s life. It is a form of Christianity without the power (2 Tm 3:5). For Christian faith to deliver what it promises, it must be integrated into every facet of a person’s life (holistic).

One of my fears about the future of Christianity in Africa is that many will turn away from it toward Islam or something else simply because the version of Christianity they were exposed to was inaccurate or superficial (left immature and not fully integrated into all of Africa life).

I want to continue this discussion in the next Newsletter as, for now, I have run out of space!
– David

Ways You Can Help

As we near the end of the year and people/churches set their budgets for next year, I thought that I would take just a moment to list some ways that you can help in the work this coming year.

Student Scholarships. If you would like to support a student at Mapepe Bible College, you can do so for \$75 per month per student (or ½ scholarship for \$40 per month). We will send you a picture of a student and a letter to introduce the student to you. I apologize that we were not able to do that this past year (Lorie and I were so overwhelmed), but we intend to pick back up with this in the future for those supporting a scholarship (or ½ scholarship).

Shipping Container. We did not send out the container as planned in October as we just didn’t have the money to do so. At this time we still do not know when we will do so; it will depend upon when we have the funds to do so. Thus, if you would like to contribute items for this next shipment, you can still do so. There is a list of things to donate on our web page: www.zambiamissions.org

The list includes things like sewing material, Bibles, children’s books, tools (especially auto mechanics), etc. Items to donate will need to be shipped or transported to where our container is sitting just east of Memphis (call 901-867-9100 for directions or address). If you would like to contribute funds to help send this container, then just mail a check to Zambia Missions (address at top of front page) and include a note that it is for the shipping container.

Eyeglasses. If you would like to donate used prescription eyeglasses or would like to donate money to buy reading glasses for the next Medical Mission in June, then can do so at any time. Information on how to do this is posted on our web page (or you can write to us for instructions).

Medical Mission. If you would like to help support the next medical mission in June, then just send your donation to “Zambia Missions” and include a note that the donation is for the Medical Mission.

Construction Projects. We still have about 1/3 of our school to be build this next year so as to finally complete this initial part of this new work in Zambia. We still have the following buildings to build: Smaller, second dorm for men, some staff houses,

two faculty houses, an administration/library/classroom building, an agricultural training workshop, etc.

Mission Trips. As I stated on the previous page, this is our most urgently needed support. Whatever monthly support we now raise will go to funding these church-planting efforts (fuel to send our students out for evangelism every week). However, if you would like to give a one-time donation to this, then you can also do this (just include a note that it is for missions campaigns).

Instructions. Information as to how you can help is always kept on our web page (which we update periodically). If you don’t have access to this web page, then just write us a note asking us to send this information printed out and we will be happy to do so. All contributions should be sent to “Zambia Missions”, 1910 Sycamore View Rd, Memphis, TN 38134. Just include a note as to what project you are contributing to and we will use it accordingly (without a note we will apply it to our greatest area of need)
Note: Because we have no overhead, 100% of what you give goes directly to what you contribute it for. Not many ministries these days can boast of this!