

# Zambia Newsletter

## Zambia Missions

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### **Problems With Electricity.**

Like most African countries these days, electricity in Zambia is becoming less and less dependable. One never knows what the real story is, but what people are being told is that one or two of the generators in the countries two power plants have broken so that now we have only ½ the electricity we had last year. There may be truth to this, but some also suspect that the Copper mines in the north are increasing and are now demanding more power than Zambia can produce for everyone. Whatever the cause, Zesco (Zambia power company) has now introduced "power sharing" (meaning Zesco rotates cutting power to some while power is given to others). And, since Zambia is not likely to build any new power plants any time soon, we all expect this to get much worse in years to come. We have now installed some backup generators so that our school activities will not be interrupted in the evenings when the lights go out. We have also had to go back to cooking with charcoal since we can no longer depend upon electricity to cook.

And, if this wasn't enough, the transformer that supplies electricity to our houses blew up. Zesco came to remove it (for repairs), but this typically takes months to get repaired (and often they cannibalize transformers to repair others - meaning it could take 1-2 years to get a transformer returned). Consequently, we decided to run an electric cable from the side of campus that works off a different transformer to the other side. This required digging by hand a trench 375 yards! In any case, this means that in the future we have a backup plan whenever one of our transformers blows up. Of course, if they both do we are just "out of luck"! So, in case you never thought about it, it is truly a great blessing to have a non-interrupted supply of electricity as we have in the USA.

**Update on Students.** This semester we have a total of 47 students (13 of whom are women). Most important is the fact that the quality of these students has increased from last year. We expect that increase to around 80 students in the second semester (May-Sept) when the older, married students come (during the dry-season when rural church leaders can attend).

**Mission Campaigns.** Our students have already gone out on two major campaign trips. This does not include all the mission works our students do every weekend. We have not yet planted any new churches

this year as we are mostly working to mature the 13 churches we have planted in the past. Of course, the rising cost of fuel continues to be our biggest challenge. Fuel is now about \$9.00 per gallon. We have not cancelled any of our planned trips, but this increase has put a serious strain on us.

**Economics.** Each year Lorie and I do a cost of living assessment so that we can determine how much to increase the salaries of our staff. We have an index of 25 items that every poor African family must buy regularly to live. Each January we record the cost of these items. According to our index, the cost of living in Zambia for poor families increased about 25%; but when we add the items that our ministry frequently buys, the inflation rate was about 40-45%. If this wasn't bad enough, we also so a decline in the dollar (against the Zambian kwacha) of about 21% from what it was in January 2007.

Most of our time in the USA this past Fall was dedicated primarily to visiting existing supporters of this work. Unfortunately, this didn't leave us much time to raise additional/new support. Although this will be the first year that our operations here have not doubled, we have nonetheless increased our staff and student enrollment by about 50%. This means, therefore, that this year will likely turn out to be a most difficult year financially. It also means that this fall (when Lorie and I return to the USA), we are going to have to focus primarily and intently upon efforts to raise additional support for next year as our work here outpacing our ability to secure the necessary funding that is needed.

**Prison Ministry.** Our prison ministry continues to flourish as our two prison ministers gain experience and respect within the prison system here in Zambia. We are seeing some great results from this work. One of our best students this semester is a prisoner who was just converted this past year. In fact, just this morning I received a report that 19 prisoners were baptized into Christ just this past weekend.

**Orphan-Care Ministry.** Over the past few months we have been in discussions with several church leaders in the USA who have been most interested to start a ministry in Zambia for orphans and widows. Just recently these discussions have led to the formation of a new ministry called, "Silent Angels of Zambia." They are in the process now of raising support and making plans to implement this new ministry. Soon they will have a web page to which I can share with you so that you can learn more about this work. If current plans are realized, then this effort should get launched this coming summer.

## **Agricultural Training & Development.**

A great deal of effort over the past year has been invested in developing our farming operations here at Mapepe and our agricultural training programs. In January we finally hired a well-trained, Zambian agricultural manager and we have now installed our drip-irrigation system (with raised beds) on the north side of our campus. We will begin shortly to develop the south side of the campus. As a result we are now selling vegetables which is generating money to help further develop our program. Our aim is to teach our students how to grow different varieties of vegetables year-round so that they might better support themselves and the work of the Lord in the future. Our students work two hours every afternoon in this vocational training program. And, not only are they learning skills that will bless their families and their villages, but they are also growing enough food to feed the student body (thus dramatically reducing our food purchases for the school).

We are increasing the number of agricultural workshops that we do each year and we are starting to do them off-campus in rural villages and in our churches. Three weeks ago, Richard Myers assisted us in conducting two of these one-week workshops. One of them was conducted in a village 30 miles south of our campus where we have no churches. Among the 40 participants was the village headman (who is a very influential man in the area). The enthusiasm and appreciation for what we did was tremendous. We will now follow up in the next few weeks with efforts to plant a church in that village. Consequently, the workshop has not only blessed the people of that village

with a way to better feed themselves, but it has also opened up the door to our efforts to bless them with the gospel of Jesus Christ! We should now have no trouble trying to gain a hearing for our message in that village.

**Medical Mission.** Our second medical mission will take place the first two weeks of June. We again have a group of about 30 Americans coming over to join us in this combined medical and mission campaign. We will be visiting six villages in the Central province where we hope to start churches within the next few months. This will be our largest mission effort this year as we position our students and past students in each of the six villages for two weeks with the intent of planting a new church.

**Missionary Retreat.** Lorie and I hosted a spiritual retreat here at Mapepe the last weekend in March for American missionaries living in central & southern Africa. We had about 20 adult missionaries here from Zambia, Malawi and Tanzania. There are not as many of us American missionaries in Africa as there once was, so we believe it is important that we build good relationships so that we can work toward common purposes here in Africa.

**Seminar in April.** Within the next few days we expect to welcome to Mapepe about 50-55 school teachers from all across Zambia who will be here for leadership training. April is a one-month break in the school system and this gives them the opportunity to come here to Mapepe. Our purpose is to train and encourage these self-supporting, church leaders to plant and mature new churches in the mission areas where they have been assigned to teach.

## **Lorie's Reflections**

My name is Michael. I am not yet one year old. My Daddy is a farm-worker at Mapepe Bible College. My mother has gone home to be with the Lord. My mother was very young when she gave birth to me. My grandmother is taking care of me with help from Mapepe Bible College. They give her milk for me each week. My grandmother struggles every day to feed me and five other grandchildren who are orphans. She works very hard. We all stay in a small one-room hut.



Dr. Waggoner (below) and his father, Richard, came to visit our compound to see how they could help. I was given some medicine and my grandmother was given money to take me to the doctor. My body has always been



small and the doctor said that I needed to stay in the hospital awhile. Yesterday, they moved me to the hospice. Maybe my body is too small and weak. There are many children who are suffering

like I have. The safest place I have known is wrapped in a chitenge on the back of my grandmother. God longs to wrap His children tightly in His loving arms. I think God's arms will



feel even safer than my grandmother's arms. Some times God uses "Silent Angels" to help His precious children here on earth.

Because of my needs and those of many others, Mapepe Bible College is in the midst of initiating a new ministry called "Silent Angels of Zambia." This ministry is being organized by several friends and supporters of Mapepe (Richard Waggoner, Ruth Orr, Raymond Smith, and David Harper). We will have more to say about this new ministry later, but its basic intent is to help orphans by empowering Zambians with the necessary skills and resources to care for their own. If you are interested in learning more about this new ministry and perhaps how to become a Silent Angel (support this effort), then please contact "Silent Angels" via email ([jrwagg@tnets.net](mailto:jrwagg@tnets.net)) or by mail: Silent Angels of Zambia (use address at the top of this newsletter reverse side). – Lorie