

Zambia Newsletter

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The Economy. There is a lot of concern about the USA economy these days and it is seriously affecting our ability to raise support for the work in Zambia. I have been back in the USA two months now trying to raise support and I have little success. In fact, most churches won't even give me the opportunity to talk to them about the work in Zambia.

I would really like to ask for your prayers. To be quite honest, I am a bit discouraged and worried about how this is going to affect the work in Zambia. We have now reached the point where we have great potential to do something truly meaningful in advancing the kingdom of God in Central Africa, but I am afraid insufficient funding is going to undermine this effort. Perhaps this is a lack of faith on my part. I do believe that God will provide what we need, but it is hard to believe when you see the harvest being left in the field.

I also know from experience that when the economy declines, churches usually reduce the amount they give to mission works. If this happens, then it is really going to undermine our work in Zambia. The declining dollar, inflation, rising fuel costs, etc have already hurt us badly over the past two years. So, I really need to ask you all to be praying for the work in Zambia!

I have just finished writing a letter to our Senior Staff in Zambia (Simubali and Mukuka) instructing them to start implementing cost-cutting measures and to make recommendations as to what staff members we can lay-off, if conditions demand it. We will likely have to reduce the number of students we can enroll and we will likely have to reduce the number of church-planting mission trips that we engage in.

There already is evidence that the economy of Zambia is being affected. The only thing Zambia produces is copper and copper prices are now falling due to the world-wide economic slowdown. This means the people of Zambia will suffer - perhaps more than most countries (as is often the case with the poor of the world). As you probably have heard, world food prices increased dramatically this past year (due to increased fuel costs and the increase in bio-fuels which divert crops from food to making gasoline). What we in the USA often fail to realize is that, if the economy is poor in the USA, it is horrible among the poorest of the world. When we sneeze, the poor countries catch pneumonia.

Graduation Class Of 2008. We celebrated the graduation of our third class of students this past month (Sept 6). This year was our largest yet with 56 students walking through the line to graduate! This is 12 more than last year. We also believe this was the best trained group of students we have graduated as we continue to learn more and more about how to train men more effectively. Several of our visiting teachers this past year (who have taught in previous years) also told us that this year's students were the best group that we have had thus far.

Lorie and Natasha. Lorie and Natasha have now returned to the USA to join me here in the USA as we endeavor to raise additional support to offset the declining dollar and our growing operation. Kerin (our 21 year-old daughter) remains in Zambia to fill in for us in our absence until January. Incidentally, I have had several people to "rebuke" me for having cut Lorie out of my last two newsletters! Hence, I am leaving her much more space in this month's newsletter (see below).

Mission Statement. Before turning over the remainder of this newsletter to Lorie, I do need to complete my report to you on our self-evaluation and the direction that we are now taking (cf. past two newsletters). This brings us to the re-writing of our Mission Statement which we believe better defines what we are attempting to accomplish. As such, our mission is: *To advance the kingdom of God by training and equipping spiritual men and women of God so that they might effectively go forth as self-supporting missionaries to make disciples throughout Central Africa.* Explanation. The ultimate goal is to advance the kingdom of God which is about calling men/women to turn from rebellion (through repentance) to submit to the will of God as set forth in Scripture. It is about calling people to become obedient to God's will -- which is what it means to be a disciple (one who follows the Master as an apprentice, learning his trade/philosophy and practicing it). To advance the kingdom, therefore, is about making disciples. In fact, the Great Commission instructs us to make disciples, not plant churches (as churches can be made up of people who are still living in rebellion to God's will). Churches are the by-product of making disciples. We must not get the cart before the horse. Disciple-making is the goal.

Our mission at Mapepe is to train men/women who can and will go out to advance the kingdom by making disciples. Obviously, therefore, the goal is to train missionaries and equip them in how to make disciples. This requires, however,

that the missionaries we sent out be men and women of high spiritual quality (fully obedient to God in their own lives), otherwise their lives will betray the message they preach and do more harm than good. As I discussed in our previous newsletter, we have come to realize that to be successful in our mission, we must develop ways to identify those whose lives are already dedicated to God's will. These are the ones into whom we must invest our time and energy (i.e., a good product begins with good material). Training the wrong people (who are lacking in character and whose lives are inconsistent with God's will) will not only waste our time, but will likely hinder the advance of the kingdom of God. Although Jesus taught the "crowds" and the 72, it was the 12 (and even the 3) into whom Jesus invested his life and the future of the kingdom. We intend to follow Jesus' example.

Lorie's Reflections

"Sing to God, praise to His name... Father of the fatherless..." (Psalms 68:4-5)

A gust of dusty wind caused the branches of the bush to dance over the small bundle which lay near the foot path. The newborn baby, alone and cold, began to cry. A group of chitenge (a wrapper skirt) clad women who were walking by on the path, stopped to see what the bundle was. As soon as they removed the chitenge from the outside of the bundle, they discovered a baby whose tiny, innocent body bore the evidence of diseases which he had contracted during birth. Feeling compassion for this one, they took him to the nearest hospital for treatment and to try to find his family. After three weeks of searching no family was found. He was taken to a Christian orphanage. He was on his way to his "forever" family.

"Children are a heritage from the Lord..." (Psalms 127: 3)

The phone rang. "We are almost home", an excited voice related, "we will be there soon!" This grandmother could hardly wait to meet the second, precious gift that God has blessed our family with since our arrival in Zambia. His arrival was on a starry night. Though no one star shone more brightly than any other in the sky, the smile on his soon-to-be big sister Susann's face was herald enough for any vehicle to know which house was awaiting the arrival of such a special little man.

Then the moment arrived. The gate opened and three generations of my family emerged: my father, my daughter, and the newest piece of our "heritage tapestry". He was so tiny and frail. I couldn't help but think of how we as God's children come into His presence frail and dependent on Him. God is always watching over us no matter how weak we are. The next several days were a frenzy of visits to several clinics for injections and multiple blood tests. A twenty-four hour watch began for any of the symptoms of AIDS. Upon his arrival at the Christian orphanage, he had tested positive. He immediately made his place in our Mapepe family as visiting "faculty/staff" aunts and uncles came to greet him.

We fell in love with this most remarkable happy baby. His entire face lit up when he smiled. It was as if he could hear the whispers of the angels. How could he be sick with this deadly disease? How could his innocent body bear the marks of someone else's sins? We prayerfully awaited the

results of each blood test. One week turned into another. Each time week after week we were told that another blood test would be needed...the results were inconclusive. With each passing hour he became more and more a part of our family. Again, I thought about how we as children of God should welcome new brothers and sisters into our growing family and nurture each one into spiritual health.

"Rejoice in the Lord always; and again I say, rejoice..." (Philippians 4:4)

A small envelope arrived. The whole house rejoiced! He appears to be negative. We will have to have him tested again when he is eighteen months old because that is when his body will be free from the antibodies of his mother. But we know that God made this little man to glorify Him. What a privilege to be allowed to serve as the earthly family for two unique blessings made in God's own image. Who knows what special ministries God has planned for our precious little baby found under a bush. After all, look at how God used the baby found in the basket to serve in His kingdom.



We thank God for compassionate people, like our daughter, Kerin and my father, Richard Waggoner, along with all of the board members for the Silent Angels of OZ (orphans in Zambia) who have made a commitment to follow the Lord by serving "the least of these".

Our new ministries to the children of Zambia are exciting. What a blessing to be the earthly arms of Our Father in heaven which hug His precious little ones. We are not a closed family though. We invite any "aunties or uncles" who would like to be a part of this ministry to join us in prayer and support.
– Lorie

Update on Silent Angels of OZ.

This is a new ministry that has been formed by several people who have already been involved with the work in Zambia for several years and who have now felt the need to develop a new ministry designed specifically to care for widows & orphans in Zambia. The American board is made up of Lorie's Dad, Richard Waggoner (chairman), Ray Smith (Spartanburg, SC), Ruth Orr (Lewisburg), and David Harper (Nashville). This ministry will have its own separate budget. Just this past month some land near Mapepe was bought and they will soon start construction on the first building (administration and housing for street kids). If you would like to learn more, go to our web page (zambiamissions.org); there is a link at the top of the page.