

Zambia Newsletter

Zambia Missions

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Besides giving you an update on the work in Zambia, I want to tell you about our recent trip to Kenya (stopped over on our way back to the USA) and finish the discussion from last month on why training our students in agriculture is so important to the work in Zambia. But, first, I want to express our **deepest thanks** to all of you who have made extra contributions to help us build the student housing that we need to complete before January. We now have sufficient funds to complete everything before January (when the next class of students will arrive)!

Trip to Kenya (Meru).

As many of you may remember, Lorie and I served as missionaries to Kenya in the early 1980's. It's been 32 years since we left. In August we were finally able to visit for the first time in 32 years. We wanted to see what had become of the work we did all those years ago.

I want to share with you what we found in Kenya for two reasons: (a) Many of you supported us in this work and I am sure that you would like to know what became of our work, and (b) I think this will serve to encourage us now as we think about what will become of our work in Zambia 32 years from now.

Lorie and I were the first missionaries from the Church of Christ to locate among the Meru tribe of Kenya. We were followed by 4-5 other missionary families who stayed for about 10 years. This trip to Kenya was to discover what kind of harvest had come as a result of our efforts 32 years ago. I have posted pictures of this visit on our Facebook page (www.facebook.com/zambiamissions).

There were four main areas (or people) that I worked with. The first person I sought out was Seraphino (the first convert I ever made in Africa). I found him where I last saw him - on his farm in Igane (where I planted the first church I ever planted in Africa). I was delighted to hear that Seraphino went on to plant several churches, six of which are still existing. On the day we visited, Seraphino gathered leaders from all six churches to meet with us.

A second man I was anxious to find was Morris Mwambia (convert from Pentecostal church). I was happy to find that he was still alive and faithful to the Lord. Morris was a dynamic church-planter. He planted numerous churches (he doesn't remember how many). I found him on his farm and was able to see the new church that he had built on his farm.

A third man that I was most anxious to meet was Ambrose (converted through WBS). I was surprised to find that Ambrose was still alive as he had T.B. and was never in good health. I spent a great deal of time working with Ambrose (more than anyone else in Meru). I was most happy to hear that he has gone on to plant 32 churches with about 3000 members. He likewise has built a new church building on his farm which now has more than 225 members. Ambrose has also become a very respected man in his area as he has been elected to the Meru County Council (like a state senator).

During my time in Meru, I spent most of my time working in the Nyambani Mountain Range. Although one of the key men I worked with in this area has died, I was delighted to find that the church has done very well in this area (more than 20 churches have been planted and some have as many as 200 members). I found one church (Kibalaku) that I worked with and found one of the elders who remembered me from 32 years ago. They have since built a new building. On the Sunday that I was there, the church leaders organized an area-wide, combined worship for the churches in the area. About 250 members from about 8 churches attended and I was invited to preach.

As we think about what kind of harvest will come from our present work in Zambia, I am most encouraged by several comparisons: (a) Zambia is much more receptive than Kenya, (b) We have already been in Zambia 12 years (compared with just two years in Kenya), (c) We have a great deal more experience now than we did back then (when I was just 26 years old), (d) We are now focused on making disciples (not just planting churches), and (e) Instead of me personally planting one church at a time, we are now training spiritual leaders who will plant many more churches than I alone could ever plant (we now have more than 500 graduates).

I was most encouraged to find such a harvest from our two years of work in Kenya - encouraged because I can actually see meaningful results. This gives me a much greater vision (expectation) for what kind of results we might one day find in Zambia 32 years from now! I can see what is possible.

Bible College.

I want to continue a discussion that I introduced in the last newsletter: Why training our students in agriculture is so important. It is important first of all because it will keep our students from becoming a burden to the churches. One of the

unfortunately things that missionaries carried with them to Africa was the expectation that churches had to have a building and a full-time preacher – not realizing that Africa can't afford either of these. Not realizing this, missionaries set up Preacher Training schools to produce graduates who had no means to support themselves yet expecting to be paid as full-time evangelists. And, instead of correcting this problem by training men to be self-supporting, most missionaries found themselves compelled to raise foreign support for these graduates (which only created many more problems and fostered long-term dependency upon Western churches).

This was not just a problem for the Churches of Christ but for all the denominational mission efforts. As the head leader of one denomination in Zambia told me recently, our preachers have become a “burden” to our churches and have begun preaching constantly about giving (many having resorted to embezzling church funds as a means of survival). It is for this reason that many preachers in Africa are now preaching the gospel of “health, wealth, and success” (abuse of 2 Cor 9:6f that God blesses those who give generously to the church). Many Africans have now come to believe that Christianity is about nothing but money (as every sermon leads to talk about giving).

The solution to this problem does not depend on generating more American support for local preachers nor from convincing Africans to give more (as one can't give what they don't have); the solution requires a change in the way we are training leaders. This is why we believe it is essential that we train leaders who can be self-supporting. And, since Zambia has plenty of good farm land, we believe that the solution lies in training our students to become successful farmers. I will continue (conclude) this discussion in the next newsletter.

Kerin's Kids (Orphans).

Carol (below) is one of the special needs children that Kerin has been working with for the past two months. She is 10 months old (wearing clothes of a four-year old) and has cerebral palsy. For the past two years she has weighed just 15 pounds and unable to gain weight. Her doctors were becoming quite concerned about her condition.

Two months ago Kerin began to give her physical therapy and to supply her mother with protein enriched foods (e.g. bananas, groundnuts, etc). This week she went to the doctor for a check-up and she weighed 22 lbs. (an increase of 7 lbs. in just two months)! The doctors and nurses were so shocked and surprised that they called over the whole clinic staff all they started cheering and clapping!



Agricultural Ministry. We have just harvested our first crop of soybeans and are in the process of processing (manually) the harvest for the buyers. Also, our students are now fully self-supporting (each is growing 24 rows of vegetables and raising 40 chickens every 5-6 weeks).

Education Ministry. Our Primary School continues to grow. We now have 75 students, 15 of whom are children of our students. Our head teacher, Isaac, just completed his teacher training (graduated with a degree in education). Over the past few months, Lorie invested a good portion of her time in providing further training to our teachers.

Women's Program. We have just recently hired Sarah, wife of one of our Bible Teachers (Bright), to be a Teacher in our training program for the students' wives.

Meet One of Our Students: Francis Mwale.

Francis is 41 years old from the Eastern Province. He has been married for 20 years (Maureen) and has two children (picture below). He has been quite active in ministry, having already planted three churches in his home area.

Francis comes from a rural community and owns about 18 acres which has a stream running across it (sufficient for drip-irrigation). He states that upon graduating from Daybreak Bible College (DBC), he plans to “continue preaching the gospel in rural areas, planting churches and teaching leaders on how to grow spiritually for the good of our community.”

When asked how attending DBC has benefited him so far, he stated that he has grown spiritually and has acquired skills that will make a big difference in his life and the lives of the people living in his home village (farming skills in particular). He goes on to say, “I thank God for considering me to study at DBC, I am gaining more knowledge in spiritual and physical welfare by learning how best to be a tent maker... which will be for the betterment of my future life and leadership abilities.”

