



Ferguson Report



Vol. 4 No. 6

“Go ye unto all the world”

June 2007

Chimala Needs You

“You can’t come to school this year. Sorry, we just don’t have the financial support.” These were the words we regretted having to say to over 20 men last year who wanted to enroll in the two-year preacher training program of the *Chimala Bible College*. Some of these men came from Tanzania, Kenya, Malawi and Cameroon. I wish I had the ability to fully express the great hungering for the gospel in East Africa and the fire equally engendered in the hearts of willing men who yearn to go to them but lack the “tools” of God’s trade.

Friends, we have the word of God, we have the facilities, we are increasing the teaching personnel, we have an excellent Bible curriculum, we have a superb model—the *Bear Valley Bible Institute of Denver*, and we have at least 24 new student applicants—men who have been (or soon will be) interviewed to take their seats as entering students for January of 2008. There is only one thing lacking: *You!*

Imagine with me: 24 graduates going in every direction teaching the lost, preaching the word, and motivating leadership by word and example. And then in another year another similar number of men return to their homes and villages. Some even venturing beyond their own borders into areas, forbidden to westerners, scattering precious seed. These men of God have been equipped because there are a group of noble Christians whose vision is beyond the sunrises and sunsets of home, whose God is bigger than the local congregation where they attend, and whose love is shown not only by the prayers on their lips but also by the telling testimony of their giving. And then another group of men, and then another, and then...

How much do you value the word of God in the hands of men? How much have you sacrificed that God’s precious seed can be sowed effectively? What would you be willing to forego that the Word might go forth? Chimala needs you. There are 24 men who do not have the resources like you and me. God has the financial means to send these men to preaching school. But His money is in your pockets and these men’s destinies are in your hands. \$100 per month will support a student. Will you consider it? Howell

Senseless Sowing?

(Editor’s note: The article that follows was written by Del Tarr, a missionary who served fourteen years in West Africa. His story illustrates the price some people pay to sow the seed of the gospel in hard soil.)

I was always perplexed by Psalm 126 until I went to the Sahel, that vast stretch of savanna more than four thousand miles wide just under the Sahara Desert. In the Sahel, all the moisture comes in a four month period: May, June, July, and August. After that, not a drop of rain falls for eight months. The ground cracks from dryness, and so do your hands and feet. The winds of the Sahara pick up the dust and throw it thousands of feet into the air. It then comes slowly drifting across West Africa as a fine grit. It gets inside your mouth. It gets inside your watch and stops it. The year’s food, of course, must all be grown in those four months. People grow sorghum or milo in small fields.

October and November...these are beautiful months. The granaries are full -- the harvest has come. People sing and dance. They eat two meals a day. The sorghum is ground between two stones to make flour and then a mush with the consistency of yesterday’s Cream of Wheat. The sticky mush is eaten hot; they roll it into little balls between their fingers, drop it into a bit of sauce and then pop it into their mouths. The meal lies heavy on their stomachs so they can sleep.

December comes, and the granaries start to recede. Many families omit the morning meal. Certainly by January not one family in fifty is still eating two meals a day. By February, the evening meal diminishes. The meal shrinks even more during March and children succumb to sickness. You don’t stay well on half a meal a day. April is the month that haunts my memory. In it you hear the babies crying in the twilight. Most of the days are passed with only an evening cup of gruel.

Then, inevitably, it happens. A six- or seven-year-old boy comes running to his father one day with sudden excitement. “Daddy! Daddy! We’ve got grain!” he shouts.

“Son, you know we haven’t had grain for weeks.” “Yes, we have!” the boy insists. “Out in the hut where we keep the goats -- there’s a leather sack hanging up

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on the wall -- I reached up and put my hand down in there -- Daddy, there's grain in there! Give it to Mommy so she can make flour, and tonight our tummies can sleep!"

The father stands motionless. "Son, we can't do that," he softly explains. "That's next year's seed grain. It's the only thing between us and starvation. We're waiting for the rains, and then we must use it."

The rains finally arrive in May, and when they do the young boy watches as his father takes the sack from the wall and does the most unreasonable thing imaginable. Instead of feeding his desperately weakened family, he goes to the field and with tears streaming down his face, he takes the precious seed and throws it away. He scatters it in the dirt! Why? Because he believes in the harvest.

The seed is his; he owns it. He can do anything with it he wants. The act of sowing it hurts so much that he cries. But as the African [preachers] say when they preach on Psalm 126, "Brother and sisters, this is God's law of the harvest. Don't expect to rejoice later on unless you have been willing to sow in tears."

And I want to ask you: How much would it cost you to sow in tears? I don't mean just giving God something from your abundance, but finding a way to say, "I believe in the harvest, and therefore I will give what makes no sense. The world would call me unreasonable to do this -- but I must sow regardless, in

order that I may someday celebrate with songs of joy."

*When the LORD brought back the
captivity of Zion,
We were like those who dream.
Then our mouth was filled with
laughter,
And our tongue with singing.
Then they said among the nations,
“The LORD has done great things for
them.”
The LORD has done great things for us,
And we are glad.
Bring back our captivity, O LORD,
As the streams in the South.
Those who sow in tears
Shall reap in joy.
He who continually goes forth weeping,
Bearing seed for sowing,
Shall doubtless come again with
rejoicing,
Bringing his sheaves with him.*

Psalm 126