



“Life!”

September 2008 update



www.dignityonline.org.uk/life



Up to now...

Seven weeks have passed since the team first entered Zambia and it has been a busy and fruitful time. The plan is that by the end of November, to plant a work of discipleship and practical change in the rural areas with leaders and Christians that already feel called to the work. Before embarking on the venture we felt very strongly that the Lord had spoken to others about this work and we came to Zambia actively seeking them.

During our planning days, we had thoughts that by the end of September we would have identified some individuals who may become part of a team. In reality, what has happened has been far more significant. We have found friends who are feeling called the same way and had been actively praying for the Lord to open a way for them. Then we happened to find one another.

During the last few weeks we have spent time listening, praying, looking and spending time in the villages with the Jesus film, and trying out various teaching methods that we hope to implement in the future. In the last 3 weeks we have spent time with over 2000 villagers.

Highlights have been seeing how in some villages, people and churches from different denominations are already being drawn together for the first time and the fantastic response of those groups to the teaching presented. In essence what has been proved is that we have read the situation correctly and that the solutions will work.

Our goal is that by the time we leave, our friends are continuing to actively work in the Life! Initiative. For us, it's about lighting a fire of God's love and transformation in every village that we can.

The "Life!" Team

Our biggest concern for the project was finding the right people to pioneer Life! in the area. We prayed that God would show us the people who were already walking in the same direction and almost to our surprise, we quickly and easily found a fantastic group of 5 pastors. These pastors were not only just the people we were looking for, but they had been praying for help and awaiting our arrival since they heard a prophetic word earlier in the year that told them that help was 'on it's way'. Over the coming months this team will grow through empowering new leaders in the villages.



Pastor Joel Mwanza (41)



Joel runs a church 45km from Chingola in Ipafu. He works a lot

with other churches and denominations. His main ministries are overnight evangelism events, preaching, equipping leaders, women's ministry. Joel recently started equipping 5 leaders from different churches in the area.

Pastor Vincent Solobee



(36) Vincent is from Kalilo and he attended bible college in Kitwe for

3 years. After finishing, unlike many he returned to the bush with his family to teach and preach in the rural areas. He has a heart to train local leaders, and to do community development which can include growing crops and training in agriculture.

Pastor Daniel Ponde



(47) Ponde is based in Chingola and lives nearby in Kasombe. He

has been pastoring since 1991 – 2004 in rural areas and is also the provincial overseer. Ponde has also attended evangelism training in South Africa. He has a particular heart for the elderly and vulnerable.

Pastor Caspa Ntambo



(53) Caspa is working in Kamita between Kaliba and

Ipafu. He oversees 6 churches in the area. Caspa does both men's and women's seminars, with a special focus on bringing the churches together.

Pastor Ranger Selehah



Selehah is based in the area of Ipafu C, and works with

a number of Evangelical churches. He is less confident with his English than the rest of the group, but was involved in the 2 weeks bush ministry whereby we visited some of the churches he oversees.

The Rural Church

There are huge problems with the church in the rural areas. Through our research, we've discovered some key issues that Life! must address.

Competition and Disunity

People often move Church. Either they disagree with the pastor or feel the church has failed to meet their needs. This creates competition and disunity.

Preaching is often poor

Trained Pastors are few in the bush and the few who are trained often have to oversee as many as 10 congregations.

Current Strategy of Oversight

Looking after so many churches is hard enough but when the churches are as much as 4 hours away, the problem is obvious. The pastors cannot get there.

Isolation

People often attend church on Sundays and don't see one another midweek. There is no community spirit.

Lack of Real Life In the Churches.

Often people are only in the church for what they think they can get out of it in terms of support, rather than for Love or serving others in the community.

Outside influences

Leaders have power to influence, but there are also many other influences such as witchcraft and other religions.



How the Church is organised



Many denominations of the Church are organised for urban ministry, not rural. Often, each rural church needs to be self supporting, but the areas are too poor and not empowered to manage this. Pastors work long hours in the fields to support their ministry. In contrast other denominations are centrally controlled and evenly distribute money across the churches. However, they often fail to plant in the rural areas.

The people and their lives

Many people don't get involved in church ministry and the community, due to an apparent 'busyness and lack of time'. Much of this is to do with the current way of life. However, it appears that the current way of working is not necessarily the most efficient way with many travelling long distances to farm. With better training and knowledge, people could work better and have much more time to invest in other things.





The need for discipleship

There is a significant and obvious need for good discipleship. However, most discipleship material is not culturally relevant for these communities and most leaders simply don't have time to do it. Without it, wounds are not healed, gifts don't develop and new leaders from congregations don't emerge. Many leaders also focus on the negative – talking of sin and how everyone is failing rather than preaching grace, forgiveness and encouraging people in their faith journey.

Life! will address all these issues and many more. Through a combination of help that is practical and spiritual and discipleship, we hope to see people gain and implement new knowledge, identify and grow in their own personal faith and gifts, taking on new corporate responsibility for the health of their church, family and community.

Loving the Lost

In September we held a conference for the Urban Church in the Chingola region. The conference was well attended with 33 different churches and ministries represented from every denomination in the area. The theme of the conference was 'Loving the Lost – Mission and Evangelism Training'. The team from the UK hosted and led the conference and it provided us with an excellent opportunity not only to encourage the church and individuals in evangelism, but also to help us identify those who may be called to the rural communities. We spoke about the problems in Zambia today, the barriers to the gospel and explained that all of us are the solution to the problem. We encouraged through speaking, workshops, testimonies and ministry; that as Christians we need to be willing to answer the call of God, leave our comfort zone and live as people in the very villages that are so needy, sharing the Love of God.





Coming up



The coming months will be exciting. October sees the beginning of the groups meeting in 5 of the villages. The villages are in the bush outside Chingola and we are praying and working towards the work spreading to many villages throughout this area, we hope 10 by the end of the year.

We're planning a training conference in early November for our new team and individuals in Churches and ministries across the Copperbelt Region in Zambia. We will also be inviting a new wave of potential leaders from a wider group of villages to introduce them to the Life! idea. This combined with spending time in the villages should ensure Life! has a good start.

We're also continuing to work with our fledgling team to work out how they can practically live in a sustainable way without detracting from the work and ministry.

It is hard to communicate that innovation and birth that is taking place. One thing is for sure, Life! is beginning in the villages surrounding Chingola.

The "Life!" Model



"Life!" is Dignity's pioneering new mission initiative. Its goal is to invest in the grass-roots villagers and leaders in rural Zambia by supporting and empowering them both spiritually and practically.

From our work to date, we know that there are many devoted Christians in Africa, who will selflessly dedicate their time and energy to helping others in need. However, these same people are hampered in their endeavours through extreme poverty and a lack of support themselves.

The 'Life!' initiative will target these people. We will support them spiritually by developing their leadership abilities and Christian Faith. We will also support them practically by transferring the skills necessary to improve their crop yields, start micro-businesses or learn basic health care techniques.

Most importantly, we will train these individuals to become teachers themselves and pass onto others what we have taught them. This will nurture self-sufficiency and the belief that their communities can transform their lives through becoming disciples of Jesus.

More Information:

www.dignityonline.org.uk/life

Supporting the Work of "Life!"

We want to enable the rural Church in Africa to live, work and proclaim the Christian gospel of love and forgiveness. The Christians in the bush lead hard lives, growing their own food and facing a lack of time and resource to make a difference. We believe that these people are seeds of change in a very challenging situation. To disciple, train and enable them is to empower the Christian gospel of love and transformation to spread throughout the villages of rural Africa.

They need your support to make this happen for themselves.

Could you donate some money or run a fundraiser for them?

Both are very simple to do. Every amount is crucial in enabling the vision of Life! to continue to become a reality.

Email enquiries@dignityonline.org.uk or download the giving forms at www.dignityonline.org.uk for more details. You can also give online at www.justgiving.com/dignity/donate

Some great people are currently in Zambia giving their time to the initiative. They are raising all of their funds themselves. Maybe you could help them.

www.justgiving.com/ruthlacey

www.justgiving.com/andyinzambia

www.justgiving.com/jobomohoho

