



Joy at Malonga

The construction of a new assembly hall at Magoma, which was reported in our last newsletter, was completed in April with an official opening ceremony on the 15th of April. We say 'ceremony' because it was attended by Chief Chinunda and other dignitaries with the obligatory cutting of a ribbon accompanied by formal speeches and so on. It was a joyous occasion attended by around 1000 people from neighbouring villages and, while no doubt many came for the food, (a slaughtered cow faithfully prepared by many sisters), it was an occasion that will be remembered for years to come. We trust the Gospel and ministry given by three brethren will also have a lasting effect.



Malonga village is located far into the bush (rural land) where houses are built with mud bricks and grass thatched roofs in the traditional style. All households are farmers, most of whom are poor by any standard, and still cultivate their fields using methods similar to those in the Old Testament. However, the Share Africa Zambia (SAZ) Outgrowers programme is making a difference as improvements in living standards with better houses, healthier children, and an expanding testimony show.

The lasting memory of the conference was the lively singing which echoed across the land. Many who attended are unable to read, so like those in the Old Testament and in the early church, the Gospel and Worship were transmitted in song, scripture reading; and teaching. Singing is in the DNA of African culture, and they are very good at it. It is a God given language, an expression of the soul, and hearing the harmonious songs of praise was very uplifting. (Israel's songs in the wilderness would be a joyful sound, so is the sound of praise in the 'bush').

We pray too that this new building will be strengthened by 'spiritual stones', built upon the Apostles doctrine.

In the picture, the hall is referred to as Malonga Gospel Hall. This name change was due to a borderline dispute about whether the land was in the Magoma village or the neighbouring Malonga village. It was settled that it should be the latter hence the reason for the new name.

Footnote: Chief Chinundi in his closing speech commended Share Africa Zambia for the work they are doing in the area and said that such Christian principles as held by the Christian brethren makes the community safer, more law abiding and more prosperous. He encouraged everyone follow such principles.

Chinyanya

(40 kilometres from Lusaka)

Our previous visit to Chinyanya was in late 2019 before the pandemic. It was at that time we provided the assembly with a boat and outboard motor, so we wanted to check if all was well, and if the boat was still in use.



It was Easter Sunday when we visited; we were warmly welcomed into a packed hall with a company of about 150 believers. They sang when we arrived and were still singing when we left. It was a memorable day yet humbling to see the extent of poverty with little prospect of improvement. Like the saints at

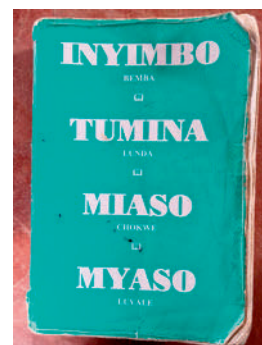
Kariba their only income comes from fishing, and because the river is seasonal, catches from August till October are small and barely enough for them to survive.



It was good to see that the boat was still in use and performing well. After the meeting they took us on a trip to the island. They use the boat to ferry people to and from this island which allows them to earn extra income. (Income they have used to install electricity in the hall). We were also impressed by the number of committed youths. When we were leaving in late afternoon more than thirty were still sitting in a circle under a tree organising a

youth conference. None of these youths were employed, some were still at school, some had finished but without the means to attend college. It is difficult to see what lies ahead for these young people. Sadly it is a similar story everywhere we visit.

The elders said they would write to us with a request for help. We did promise to get hymnbooks (see picture) but cautioned them that with dozens of assemblies asking for help, we couldn't promise much. All in all, it was a bitter-sweet experience. No doubt that in such circumstances faith becomes stronger.



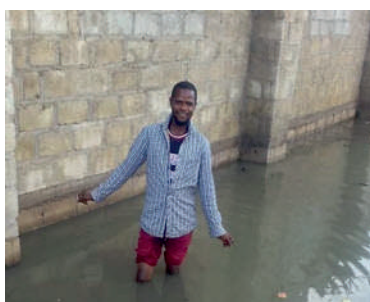
As one has said, "Christ is all we need when he is all we've got".

Soweto and John Laing

The assemblies in the Lusaka district continue to expand with numbers now estimated to be around sixty. As the Holy Spirit works, so too do the believers in street and radio outreach. Most people in Zambia claim to be Christian which is evidenced by the number of denominational churches dotted everywhere. It is understood that the less developed countries are more 'religious' than the prosperous west which, after the renaissance and post modernism, has drifted towards secular liberalism, eroding the Biblical values upon which their strength was built. Nevertheless, suffice to say that those who are 'rich' in the modern world, and who hold traditional Biblical values, have a responsibility to support their fellow believers so that the Church continues to grow.

One of the aims of Share Africa is to support assemblies that need material help, whether buildings, Bibles, or evangelistic material. Since most of our current projects are almost complete our next commitment is to help finish two buildings in Lusaka,

one for the assembly at Soweto and one for the assembly at John Laing. Both have structures already built up to roof level but lack the means to complete the roof.



This year heavy rains caused flooding at the **John Laing** premises where the believers normally meet under temporary cover. But as you will see from the pictures, they had to abandon the premises for several weeks.



We also met with the elders at **Soweto** who too need help with a roof. No one in the assembly is in secular

employment, all are street traders except for one brother who has building skills. This same brother has constructed the building up to roof level where it remains until now).

Orphan Support Programme

Visiting orphans in their homes reveals the extent of poverty experienced by many households. The suburbs in Lusaka are a maze of roughly constructed concrete houses mostly built by landlords to accommodate the expanding population who simply need shelter for their families. There is no tap water, no proper sanitation, cooking is done outside on charcoal fires, rooms are overcrowded, and pools of stagnant water surround many homes. The orphaned children who live with relatives in these conditions must survive as best they can. The food and school allowance provided by SAZ gives them a glimmer of hope.



Denis Chengo with his grandchildren Sabina, Joseph and Dixon

Most households in suburban Lusaka, a city of 2.5 million, make a living selling merchandise from street stalls or pavements. In a good month earnings can be 1000 Kwacha (£40) which is to feed a family, pay rent, and buy the bare essentials. Considering a bag of mealie meal (their basic food), presently costs about £10, and rent about £15 per month, then it is clear why so many are struggling.

The Orphan Program currently supports 220 children both in Lusaka and further afield. Those living in rural areas may have a better life but face different challenges. The following report from Patricia (our program administrator), is about a girl living near Lake Kariba. It shows how the program also combines children in rural areas.

From Kmbimbi near Lake Kariba



Food being delivered to orphans at Kamimbi

Kambimbi is a rural area of Siavonga on the banks of Lake Kariba. The area is usually hot, rainfall is light, and soils are not fertile enough to grow cash crops. The main activity is fishing and selling fish at the local market. Recently the fishermen were glad to receive a gift of new nets, but while the new nets improved their fishing the small canoes can still only catch enough to earn a small income.

They are a prayerful group. It is not uncommon to hear them singing hymns throughout the day either in groups or as individuals. At the end of 2022, there were four children on the program with twelve more recruited in January 2023. Some of the new children are single orphans, while others are double orphans (having lost both parents). The school they attend is about 11 kilometres from where they live which means they have to start off early and get home late. However, the walk to and from school makes the children good school mates. Due to the difficulties of orphanhood, some children are a few grades behind relative to their age but all pledge their commitment to learn. One double orphan who was recently recruited is **Jessica Mwansa**.

Here is Jessica's story:

Jessica lost her father in 2011 and her mother in May 2022. When interviewing Jessica in November 2022, she could not speak unbrokenly as tears kept flowing from her eyes. Jessica lives with her uncle who has three children and three dependents. Thankfully Jessica was sponsored by Share Africa and had good reason to smile when the team visited the area in February 2023. It was the first time



Jessica

Jessica received her donation from Share Africa. Here is what she said, "When my mother died, I didn't know what to do or what to expect from life. It appeared like the end of the world. When you came last November to add me to the program, I didn't really believe it but all the same I prayed about it. Today I am very happy and thankful to God that I am one of the children you have come to help. Thank you very much even for the gifts you brought, you have given me a good sense of hope"

Chipata

Outgrowers Program

Since the onset of the rains early in November 2022, normal rains have continued throughout the season resulting in healthy crops that are now ready to harvest. It is a time when people see the fruits of their labour and give thanks to God.



Batanege (farm manager) with his wife Malitina and new baby Vigilia

Harvesting groundnut seed is a prolonged and laborious task. Plants are lifted by hand, the pods are removed and then dried before being hand shelled. The seed is then hand sorted to remove broken and damaged nuts before being graded and bagged ready for the next planting season (see article on jobs for women). The process can take several months, which means the farmers must wait for payment until the nuts are bagged and weighed.



Eustus Zulu and Kapena Tonga in soya field

Soya crops are harvested when the pods are dry and ready to burst. The crops are then cut by hand and threshed. This year we acquired new threshing machines which have improved productivity and reduced crop damage. The process is still primitive, but it is a vast improvement on previous years. The soya seed, like groundnuts, must be hand sorted before bagging.

Although the yields this year are expected to be better, the farmers won't know the true benefit until they know the market price. Since SAZ-Agri is 'non-profit making' we always pay above market price.

Other crops such as sunflower, beans, and maize, are also grown but in smaller quantities since we are still maturing these new varieties (see article on Maize).

Most crops we grow are specialized seed crops, so it takes time to train the farmers to get the necessary certification. Every farm, as well as the seed produced, must be approved by the Ministry of Agriculture. But since seed is far more valuable than grain the effort is worthwhile.

The seed we produce are early maturing varieties which are more drought tolerant hence reducing exposure to climate change. This improved seed is given to other grain farmers throughout the region which results in improved yields and higher earnings.



Harvesting with a new shelling machine

Overall, the program has been a real success with over 400 farmers now benefiting. Most are assembly believers who are seeing incremental improvements in earnings. They are still relatively poor, and the risk of flooding and extreme drought will continue to be unpredictable. In comparison those who migrate to city suburbs with no money or academic qualifications or experience, will suffer outcomes similar to the 'prodigal son'. Staying in farming should have better prospects. It is also important for maintaining rural cultures, in which small assemblies thrive, that the next generation stay in farming. (Perhaps like the fishing, mining and shipbuilding industries that became the seeding ground for assemblies in Scotland).

New Variety of Maze

We are excited about a new variety of maze that has been developed over the last three years and is about to crop for the first time. If successful it will greatly improve outputs in the coming seasons. More about this in later newsletters.

Bicycle Evangelists



David Chileshe

The so-called Bicycle Evangelists are a group of believers from assemblies in Lusaka who travel to towns and villages to spread the Gospel. They are commended by their assemblies but support themselves through work with additional help from well-wishers. They are normally away for a week

at a time, leaving their street-stalls to be managed by relatives. Here is a brief report about a recent work done in Mungule, a town 15 miles from Lusaka.

The people in Mungule are subsistence farmers, mostly very poor with limited education. After one year and many visits covering 465 homes, 124 people gave their lives to Christ and 30 agreed to meet regularly to discuss their faith. In January 29th this year a small



The evangelists

assembly was established. One elder and three deacons were appointed to oversee the work.



Meeting at Mungule

The evangelists will continue to travel to Mungule until the church is established. They have asked other brethren from Lusaka to devote time to help with basic teaching.

The brethren thanked Share Africa for the gift of bicycles, and have a further request for Bibles, simple illustrated literature, and hymnbooks. Share Africa will respond to this request.

Church Feeding Programme

The monthly distribution of food to the poor in Lusaka assemblies continues. Six assemblies are visited each month with a delivery of Corn Soya Blend (a nutritious breakfast porridge made at our factory). The food is much needed and greatly appreciated. When accompanying Chomba, (the program administrator), on a recent visit we were humbled to see the need, particularly among the children and the elderly. The gratitude on the faces of those who received the food made the Scripture 'it is better to give than to receive' more poignant. Poverty in these suburbs cannot be compared to the poverty we see and read about in the UK.



Inside the hall at at Bauleni

The two pictures were taken during a distribution to at Bauleni assembly. This was the first time they had received help. The elders had identified in advance those who were in most need. Chomba logs the details of each person who receives food then updates the records when she gets back to the office.



People leaving with food

Currently Share Africa Zambia produces and delivers about 8 ton of food a month, but the need is far greater. The program is funded by UK donors who we thank on behalf of the community. Share Africa Zambia runs the program which has one administrator, one loader, and one van. We do our best to keep cost to a minimum.

Empowering Women at Chipata

In the last year, SAZ-Agri embarked on a program to empower women in agriculture through groundnut seed production. SAZ-Agri sourced 4.5MT of groundnut basic seed to provide for a total of 150 women in Chipata, Eastern Province, Zambia.



Empowering women in groundnut seed production can have a profound impact on their lives, families, and communities. It can improve their economic status, enhance their social and nutritional well-being, and promote gender equality.

SAZ-Agri engaged the Seed Control and Certification Institute to have all the women trained in groundnut seed production. The women were clustered into 10 groups of fifteen and assisted to form farmer groups registered with the local authorities. This was desired so as to have a sustainable model of empowerment that will thrive even beyond external assistance. Each group has an elected executive and can govern its own affairs. SAZ-Agri distributed 3 early maturing groundnut varieties to the groups and made regular visitations to selected fields.

We are pleased to see that the initiative has yielded positive results.

Micro Funding

With regular employment difficult to find, selling produce in the market or street stall is the most common way for people to earn a living. It is hard and competitive where only those with capital make a reasonable income. For the widows and elderly it is very difficult because they only have capital to buy a few vegetables or small groceries which make little profit.

We intend to trial a pilot scheme for a few women where we provide the initial capital to buy something that will make a higher margin.

(I am sure the purple cloth or garments that Lydia bought for resale were quite expensive).

We cannot stand by and watch people struggling to earn a living when they could be more successful with a little capital. Many have the ability but just lack the funding, (Bank loans at 35% are out of the question). There is much to consider but we shouldn't continue giving handouts if people are able to work.

We will give an update in our next newsletter.

*Thanks to all who support the work. We pray the Lord will continue to bless both the spiritual and practical activities such that some relief will be brought to His people.
(Galatians 6:10)*

Ways to Support

- 1. BY DEBIT/CREDIT CARD/DIRECT DEBIT** using our website www.shareafrica.com and selecting 'Donations' from the main menu bar.
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