

African Training Schools Report

by Jerry V. Hogg

Mapepe Bible College - Lusaka, Zambia

Mapepe Bible College was originally started in the late 1950's, and operated as a two-year training program for about five years. Unfortunately, when the founding foreign missionary returned home in 1964, the financial support dried up, and the school closed. The school remained closed for the next forty years until *Sunset International Bible Institute* (SIBI) initiated an effort in partnership with the *Zambian Board of Trustees* to restart the school. **David and Lorie French** (See photo to the right) were asked to serve as the Dean for this new school which was



restarted in 2005 at the Central Church of Christ in downtown Lusaka on a temporary basis. The school once again began operations in early 2005 and was re-started as a Branch School of SIBI. However, it was soon decided that the school should be re-classified as an independent, indigenous school since it already had a *Zambian Board of Trustees*. Hence, it was re-defined in 2006 as an *Affiliated School* with SIBI and its program accredited by SIBI. Also, in an effort to promote the indigenous nature of the school, **Thomas Simubali** (Zambian) was appointed in 2006 to serve as the first *Director of Mapepe Bible School*. (Information taken from *zambiamissions.org*)



Their study program has been based on bringing students to **Mapepe** during the winter months... May to September. This is the dry season which allows for men to be away from their homes after the harvest months have passed and the planting season will only occur during October/November. However, beginning in January 2010, the first full-time training program will begin with students being selected from the winter classes of graduates as well as those who apply to attend. During the planting and growing season, the college continues its training by bringing select groups of students to **Mapepe** for special

courses and encouragement. During April 2009, a group of public school teachers (above photo) were brought to the college for specialized training to help them better understand the Scriptures, with a view to encourage them and increase their knowledge for their work with students from a spiritual point of view.

The first graduation class was in September 2006, with 14 students. Chris Swinford and I were present at the school's first graduation. It was a joy being part of this historical moment. Local Christians had made the caps & gowns the students wore for the graduation ceremony. They were very proud of their accomplishments. Families and friends of the graduates were part of the ceremony.



In most African nations there is a desperate need to not only teach the Bible, but also to give the



students additional training to help them survive and support their families when they return to their homes. Most churches are very poor and unable to supply support for a local minister. At **Mapepe**, the students learn better techniques of farming and growing vegetables for their own personal use, but also to supply their own support. Methods learned (drip irrigation and rotation of crops) in growing productive gardens can also be taught to the church and the village people. It not only will help improve the proper food supply

for everyone, but also will be used as an evangelistic tool in an Outreach Program. A number of other projects is planned to complete their training, such as: (1) a small orphanage to take in abandoned children, and (2) a medical clinic to help the people physically, but also help the students to become “village doctors” upon their graduation. The staff at **Mapepe** are presently making plans to become more proactive in evangelism and church planting.

David and Lorie French are to be commended for their leadership role within the school and their willingness to accept this role in the life of the **Mapepe Bible College**. Their daughter, **Karen**, has become so involved in the life of the people in Zambia that she has adopted two Zambian children that had been abandoned. The French family’s life is totally involved in the training, teaching, and helping the people of Zambia.

Highlights for the proposed study program in Zambia:

1. The school has a long history of service to the people of Zambia.
2. The staff, both David & Lorie French and the local workers, are totally dedicated to the work.
3. It is slowly developing into a “well rounded” training program to help Zambians have a better quality of life.
4. In order to better serve the people David French spends a lot of time just dreaming and talking about the future of Mapepe Bible College.
5. Sponsoring congregation is the Sycamore View church in Memphis, TN. Other congregations and individuals assist with any number of financial needs.

Present Needs for the Mapepe Bible College:

1. A family to move to Zambia to begin working with the French family.
2. Funding to help with the construction of married student dorms.
3. Teachers to help with the teaching program at Mapepe for a short time frame. They have very comfortable housing for those visiting the campus for teaching purposes. (House at right.)
4. For information: www.zambianmissions.org



Guest House at Mapepe