

# MISSION TO BURUNDI

DECEMBER  
2018

creating a community of grace



Christmas greetings from Zambia—yes, ZAMBIA!

Surveying the needs here in Zambia and considering the logistics and effort it takes to close a work and get started again in another country, we rethought our original plan to move on to our targeted field of Burundi after 9-10 months and have decided to complete our entire first two-year term in Zambia. Getting back to Africa has been fruitful with numerous ministries sprouting that have the potential to leave the Zambian Grace Churches on a steadier pattern of growth and increasing maturity. Mentoring and training leaders takes time and we see our role in Zambia as not yet complete. Please pray with us as we remain in Zambia one more year and ask the Lord to direct our eventual transition to Burundi.

The main focus for what we do as GMI missionaries is to enable Africans to reach and teach fellow Africans. One way Michelle contributes to this focus is to provide basic computer and writing skills training to Zambian missionary teachers who are willing to leave the familiarity of their hometowns to go to parts of their country that are unreached with the gospel. They're using the teaching profession as a way to become tentmakers who support themselves in secular work while engaging in evangelism and discipleship on their off time in places no other teacher wants to go. Michelle is mentoring and helping them write prayer and fundraising letters as they seek support from Zambian church members

who are new to the concept of being SENDERS of missionaries, not just recipients!

Tom has been working with leaders from several countries to develop an effective and practical approach to prepare leaders for local churches. It has been found that most who are leading local assemblies can't get away from their families and livelihoods for any significant amount of time to be discipled and attend centralized schools for the theological education they need. Bible correspondence courses (BCC) have been used in the past as a distance learning tool to get around this obstacle and have been revived. The spread of cellphones, computers, and photocopying technology have made it far easier to tap into this resource. We requested and have been given permission to use Bible Correspondence Fellowship's course materials, and in return, we are editing the lessons so that they fit the size of paper used here and require fewer pages to be photocopied. The courses can be downloaded anywhere in the world

by anyone with a working knowledge of English who wants to increase their knowledge of the Word of God. While we've been getting these lessons ready for use in Africa an amazing thing happened: they were introduced to the local prison and immediately over 150 lessons were distributed and returned within a week, completed by prisoners wanting to study the Bible. We are now trying to keep the prison chaplain supplied with lessons for inmates. To see more on the BCC prison ministry tidal wave, see our December email blast. If you are interested in helping this rapidly expanding ministry, donations can be made through the GMI Christmas catalog at <https://www.gracem.org/christmas-catalog/>.

To help pass on medical expertise, Tom is working two days per week in Kabwe Central Hospital's Outpatient Department (OPD) which functions like an ER that receives everything but trauma cases. The hospital was recently upgraded from being a General hospital to a Central hospital because there are a few spe-



July seminar on **Mission & Vision** with young Zimbabwe church



Prison Ministry Chaplain Jackson, Tom, Michelle, and Grace Church elder Eddie Phiri

cialist physicians available at certain times of the day. Most of the other providers in the OPD are roughly the equivalent of US physician assistants. Knowledge is shared as we care for patients shoulder-to-shoulder. Tom has also helped out at the nursing school attached to the hospital by teaching on the topic of community health.

Another way we enable Africans to help other Africans is by hosting and working with visitors who put their best into local churches. From late May until August 1, Worship Arts interns from Grace Christian University, David Schrock and Hailey Petty were here with us. In September, Rob and Amy Caldwell from Rush Creek Bible Church visited, bringing with them a youth discipleship program on servant leadership. In July, GMI board member Jimmy Moore came to lead a seminar on Mission & Vision development in neighboring Zimbabwe for the young leadership there who represent the Grace Churches. In November, Bill Vinton was our guest from Malawi who brought teaching expertise on leadership to two different cities. It felt like old times in the 1980s and '90s in Congo where Tom and Bill had ministered together travelling village to village.

We also hold a weekly Bible study for Zambian leaders on Thursdays and hope to add local pastors and more elders to the small group that



*In Livingstone, Zambia, with the Caldwell's presenting **Servant Leadership***

is currently participating. We must be showing our gray because we have also found a role in mentoring young missionary families who experience some turmoil as they adjust to missionary life in Africa. Some mentoring requests have come through the work we do as members of our local church, Grace Community Fellowship in Kabwe where Tom serves as an elder, and Michelle as cotreasurer

year of our return to Africa, we'd like to thank you for sharing in this ministry and allowing us to represent your helping hands to the growing and vibrant African churches that are now becoming sending countries. Please pray for special grace for us this time of year as we're away from our children after many years of gathering our family together for Christmas in snowy Michigan! Accepting the



*At the Lusaka Grace Church presenting a weekend seminar on leadership with Bill Vinton*

oversees the distribution of support from church offerings to Zambian missionaries and Zambian-led ministries.

The season of Advent is upon us and during this time of joy and hope we're grateful for the salvation founded on His love that He brought to us over 2,000 years ago. Praise God for sending a Redeemer! As we look back over this incredible first

reality of this distance is how we see our family setting our sights on the realities of heaven and dying to this life (Colossians 3:1-3).

Thanks again for the privilege of representing you to African sister churches and the people they serve. If you're interested in hearing more about our work, contact us at [michelle.sanchez@gracem.org](mailto:michelle.sanchez@gracem.org) and we'll add your name to our email update list.

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