

# Focus Newsletter

ZEMA SUMMER 2025 EDITION



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# *Home Office Report*

BY GREG AND CARLENE SEGHERS

We are excited and thankful for the participation of the ZEMA board members. Some are introducing us to churches new to ZEMA, others are encouraging us in administrative tasks such as plans for developing ZEMA's platform and improving policy for onboarding new missionaries and evaluating our current member care. Additionally, this fall several board members are planning to visit Southern Africa and experience the work that God is doing among the amaZioni for themselves. Additionally, these board members look forward to being with and encouraging our missionaries and partners on the field. Des Venter will be traveling to South Africa in September for two weeks. Des, a South African born pastor (now in the USA) will meet with Paul Seelhammer (ZEMA's Field Director) and South African pastors to introduce them to the work that ZEMA is doing. Geff Lee and his wife Katy will be helping at Sunbury Christian Camp for 3 months from October through the first of January. Mike Gibbs (ZEMA's Board chairman) will be traveling to South Africa with his wife Jill for a month in October to encourage the missionaries and see ZEMA's work.

We would also like to inform anyone with privately owned businesses or companies that we were given an opportunity to benefit from a credit card processing company (PayRoc). PayRoc, a Christian-owned credit card processor, is willing to partner with ZEMA to donate a portion of the credit card processing fee to ZEMA from any businesses that choose to use PayRoc's services to benefit ZEMA. If you know of such a business and would like more information, please contact Kevin Pinter (Board member) at [kevin@compassministries.com](mailto:kevin@compassministries.com)

Finally, we have several teaching opportunities: VBS at Grace Church in Zion, Highschool Camp at Camp Zion in Door County, and teaching once again at Moody Bible Institute in the fall. Please pray with us as we prepare for these opportunities. Pray that God would reveal Himself to each child, teenager and adult involved. And pray that God would guide us and provide for every detail as we prepare and participate in body-life as He grows His Church.

~Greg and Carlene Seghers



## *Richard & Geraldine Akers Ministry, 1989-2025*

BY GREG AKERS

Richard and Geraldine were the children of career missionaries and so it was no surprise when they took the decision after 4 years of pastoral ministry to leave the Pastorate at Crystal Park Baptist Church in Benoni and join the mission agency known at that time as the MAHON MISSION.

The sense of a 'call to missions' came about when they visited the Mahon Mission and were exposed to a largely undeveloped missions opportunity among a religious group of people known as the 'amaZioni' who mostly could be described as 'syncretistic', people who mixed Biblical truth with traditional religion and came out with doctrines and practices which were not Biblical, doctrines and practices which kept them in spiritual darkness, ruled by fear. That visit was a life changing experience for Richard and Geraldine who declared a sense of call to ministry among the amaZioni in the Transkei region of the Eastern Cape in South Africa towards the middle of 1989.

For anyone who knows the history of South Africa you would know that Nelson Mandela was released from political imprisonment in 1990 and the Transkei quickly became a hotbed of political unrest. But not so well known is the incredible open door that swung open for ministry among the amaZioni. The Akers were able to visit and preach and teach among so many amaZioni and so light came where there was only darkness and fear. The words of Fanny Jane Crosby came to life again and again:

*Down in the human heart, Crushed by the tempter,  
Feelings lie buried that grace can restore;  
Touched by a loving heart, Wakened by kindness,  
Chords that are broken will vibrate once more.*

The ministry in those early days consisted mainly of visiting amaZioni Church leaders and congregations, being with the people and declaring the message of the Gospel. The amaZioni, while syncretistic, were not apostate. Therefore, they were receptive to Bible teaching, especially the three teachings of Salvation, Healing and Holy Living. These three foundational teachings were part and parcel of the early amaZioni movement in South Africa in the early 1900's, and so when the Akers arrived and were teaching these things, many amaZioni Church leaders returned to these Biblical truths. It was seen time and time again that when light came to Church leaders it was not unusual for whole congregations to turn to the light as well.

The Akers ended up spending 15 years in the Transkei. In the first 5 years or so many kinds of ministry developed. It might have been because the Akers lived in such a small house that they spent most of their time among the people, using a caravan/camper, taking Christopher, Gregory and Naomi along with them to spend days at a time in the villages all around the Transkei. One local amaZioni Bishop said that the Akers know more roads in the Transkei than the local people.

Sunday Schools were established, Geraldine started a pre-school, and ladies' meetings were held. The Jesus film was shown hundreds of times using an old reel projector and generator, sometimes in the rain when people said, 'Don't stop now, we walked through rivers to get here'! All-night Church services were the regular part of amaZioni life and so a lot of preaching was done between 2am and 3am. 'Missions Week' was established during the Winter School holidays and many Churches from South Africa and the US sent teams year after year to reach out into local communities through Children's Holiday Clubs, or delivering water to the villages, or by bringing doctors and nurses to hold clinics, or by giving thousands of donated clothing pieces to local folk.



But all the time it was the teaching that took priority. The Akers met hundreds of Church leaders all over the Transkei. But in all those hundreds there wasn't a single one who had had any kind of formal Bible teaching. They decided to use the booklet 'This We Believe', which had been written by Bible teachers in Zion, Illinois, USA (where the Zion movement started) as a curriculum, and taught all over the Transkei doing three lessons in three different villages every week. What a blessing that book was and is! But it was only a very basic outline of Biblical Truth and so after some years it was decided to write a more comprehensive set of lessons aimed particularly at the amaZioni. This led to Richard writing a four-year teaching course which came to be called the Zion Evangelical Bible School (ZEBS).

By God's grace, the first classes were attended by twelve local amaZioni, and has now spread through Southern Africa and proving to be a real blessing to the amaZioni.

The Akers relocated to Nelspruit in December 2007 and have for the last 17 years followed a similar mode of ministry in Moçambique and the Mpumalanga province of South Africa.

What has kept the Akers to stay the course? In Mark 1:38 Jesus said, "Let us go somewhere else—to the nearby villages—so I can preach there also. That is why I have come."

*Rescue the perishing,  
Duty demands it;  
Strength for thy labor the Lord will provide;  
Back to the narrow way,  
Patiently win them;  
Tell the poor wand'rer a Savior has died*

**Richard and Geraldine retired as ZEMA missionaries in February this year. The Akers are grateful to their supporters who have encouraged them faithfully over their 36 years of ZEMA ministry. In accordance with ZEMA policy, continued support for the Akers may be used for their medical expenses and when ministry expenses are accrued in retirement.**



## *Board Member Spotlight*



**Geff Lee**

Geff was born in Durban, South Africa, to American missionaries serving with The Mahon Mission (now ZEMA).

Meeting Katy, his wife, in a high school church youth group, Geff and Katy were married in Amanzimtoti, SA, after a 2-½ year courtship. Geff joined the police department after high school and served five years to fulfill his military obligation to the South African government. During Geff's final year of government service, he and Katy sensed God's call also to serve Him and share Jesus with the indigenous people of Southern Africa.

Geff and Katy applied and were accepted by the Mahon Mission, provided Geff acquired the appropriate theological training. Enrolling in the

Geff acquired the appropriate theological training. Enrolling in the four-year Licentiate course at the Baptist Theological College of Southern Africa, Geff studied while working with Mahon missionaries during weekends and vacations. He and Katy served with the Mahon Mission for 12 years, after which they also worked for two years with the Leprosy Mission ~ in Southern Africa.

In December 1997, Geff and Katy moved their family to Zion, Illinois, and in 1998, Geff joined the ZEMA Board of Directors. Geff also served on the missions committee of Christ Community Church in Zion, IL. Currently, the Lees have retired and moved to Greeneville, TN, where they enjoy volunteering in their local church, the First Baptist Church of Greeneville. Geff and Katy love to share in God's work among the amaZioni and serve as short-term ministry partners as they are able.

The Lees are thankful for the support and encouragement of their friends and local church and have currently agreed to serve once again at Sunbury Christian Camp from October 2025 until after ZEMA's Annual Conference in January. Geff and Katy have three children and three grandchildren.

## *New Fields of Ministry*

Luan Goosen recently reported that after hearing of Malawian Zionists being reached with the Bible, a man from an evangelical church in Malawi responded, "The Zionists cannot be penetrated or changed." This man was adamant that the Zionists are a closed group. Though he was outspoken, later, having travelled to some of these churches, after a few days, he returned with another view. Having visited some of these Zionists himself, he changed his story. This man now says that the Bible teaching given to the Zion leaders has completely changed them! He apologized, acknowledging that the Zionists are now wholeheartedly embracing the truth of God's Word! Lord willing, ZEMA missionaries plan to visit Malawi to train local church leaders three times a year. Pray for more workers, wisdom, and resources to support this ongoing ministry in Malawi, especially since leaders from the northern parts of Malawi are also urging us to go there.

***All ZEMA missionaries rely on the faithful support of donors. Any donation toward ZEMA projects, such as the New Fields Fund, should be over and above your current giving commitments. We appreciate your participation and value your partnership with us. We trust God to provide for ZEMA projects without jeopardizing individual missionary commitments. Click [HERE](#) for a description of the [New Fields Project](#).***