

A Note from ZEMA Missionary Carrie Seelhammer...

Through the years of ministry in South Africa I have noticed that, in general, the people in the church, Zionist and non-Zionist, have a lack of desire regarding Christian ministry to children. Perhaps it's a lack of knowledge about how to do so that leads to this lack of desire. The Bible is very clear about the responsibility of parents to train up their children in the knowledge of Him. Not all of us parents are skilled in how to do this! I have tried and learned and tried and learned with my own children and with the children of the church. Ministry to children is a challenge and it is also a command from the Lord. The Lord does promise us that he will bless our efforts, and that his Word never returns void. Even if we are not quite sure about HOW to train up our children in the faith, the Lord knows our hearts and will help us through his Holy Spirit. Praise the Lord! I have hope that the efforts I put into training my children in the faith will prove fruitful as I now have grown children who are learning how to live their lives of faith on their own. Eish!

The Zion Evangelical Ministries of Africa, of which I am a missionary, has an opportunity. The Lord has called me to ZEMA, and I am sensing his leading to help ZEMA missionaries and ministry partners organize ourselves and join together to train up Zionist children in the Christian faith. Though I've been organizing the "Children of Zion," I do not claim to know everything about children's ministry! In fact, I only feel lead by compassion and ideas because I know that the Lord through his Holy Spirit does the work of changing hearts. As ministers to children, we are the seed planters and plant waterers. We can be encouragers to those with children in their homes and in their churches.



The Lord gave me a challenge. We see new opportunities to lead Zionist leaders to teach the Word of God to children, and have life-changing impact that will result in a new generation of Bible-believing people. AmaZioni who will testify that the Lord God is the only true God: alive and active as is His Word and who will be able to train up the next generation to obey God and his Word.

The purpose of "The Children of Zion" is to encourage Zionist families and churches to train up their children in the Christian faith. Read the account of Gideon in Judges chapter 6. God shows us through this account how he provided for the people of Israel. Gideon was not confident in his abilities to lead. He and his men were seriously outnumbered by the enemy. What the men of Israel did have was faith and trust which made them people with a "mission". God gave Gideon effective tools and ideas. They obeyed God and experienced the victory. Gideon and his men "fought" with courage and clever ideas, both given by God at the right time. **Let us be people of courage and clever ideas who follow the Lord in ministry to children with faith and trust in the One True God.**



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June 2021 Newsletter



This edition of the Focus Newsletter will give you insight into ZEMA's Children's Ministry Program and our future plans for Children's Ministry. The articles were contributed by two ZEMA missionaries: Susanne Goosen and Carrie Seelhammer

We are grateful for you!

We are so grateful for your faithful prayers and giving. We want to include a thank you to those who remember to notify us of a change of address or payment method for your automated donations.

Your thoughtfulness is appreciated!

Thank you!

Inside This Issue

Page 2 **Sunday School Teacher Training — Reaching the Next Generation for Christ**

Contributed by Susanne Goosen

Page 3 **Looking to the Future of Children's Ministry**

Contributed by Carrie Seelhammer

Page 4 **A Note from Missionary Carrie Seelhammer**

Sunday School Teacher Training ... Reaching the Next Generation for Christ

Sunday School Teacher Training (SSTT) is important to reach the next generation for Christ! As Romans 10:13-14 says, "For everyone who calls on the name of the Lord will be saved... How are they to believe in him of whom they have never heard? And how are they to hear without someone preaching to them? Many children are spiritually neglected by adults because it is assumed that they are not able to understand the truths in the Bible. In the past children were told to play outside while the adults had church inside. However, many believers are now realizing that God commands them to diligently and continually teach children to love the Lord their God with all their heart, mind and soul (Deuteronomy 6:5-9); and they are starting to take this task very seriously.

The challenge for many churches is that they have the desire to tell the children the truths in the Bible, but they have limited knowledge themselves and don't know where to start. It was for this reason that the Sunday School teacher training ministry was started.

In the past at ZEMA's SSTT, we invited anyone who was interested to come to a venue that was easily accessible to public transportation (like a local Bible school lecture hall), and we advertised on phone messaging as well as by word of mouth. People from as far as two hours away came to learn how to do children's ministry. They learned the Biblical basis for doing children's ministry and then were taught practical skills such as teaching songs, Bible verses and a lesson around a theme – using visual aids. When we took a tea break, the people would fellowship with each other



and exchange numbers to keep in contact and form a network of support, especially when they felt discouraged and alone. They realized that there were others who also had a passion for children to find the Savior. Many questions were asked based on their previous challenges; but by the time the people left the workshop at the end of the afternoon, their faces were beaming with joy. We tried to inspire the attendees to be resourceful with what God has already entrusted to them and to keep pointing children to Christ. Many expressed that they were encouraged and felt more equipped to reach out to the children in their communities with the Word of God whereas previously they were so timid and felt like giving up. The Sunday School teacher training course was eagerly received and became an anticipated annual event.

We are always looking for new ways to reach more children with the gospel message – the old, old story that still transforms lives from the kingdom of darkness to the kingdom of light. Praise God for His mercy and power to save!!

—Article Contributed by Susanne Goosen



Looking to the Future of Children's Ministry

Praise the Lord for the wonderful curriculum that was developed by missionaries and used over the years. The SSTT curriculum is a set of lessons that teach people "how" to teach Sunday School. The SSTT events are a one-day seminar that teach a variety of lessons. We pray the students will return to their churches excited and equipped for children's ministry. The goal is for the students to return to the next SSTT seminar because the amount of information to learn is too much for one seminar.

It is difficult to find time to organize the SSTT seminars. The ZEBS classes are every weekend, so we look for a day with no ZEBS to have the SSTT. We promote the SSTT at ZEBS classes to encourage church leaders to attend or send someone from their church to attend training class. Sometimes we do not have a day available. Sometimes we have a SSTT in only one location. Historically, there have been many requests for SSTT which lets us know the great potential for more children's ministry. We also do not always have enough missionaries available to teach the SSTT as often as we are asked. Some ZEBS are in locations where the SSTT missionaries do not live.

Currently, a group of ZEMA missionaries is working together to develop the children's ministry into something more: The Children of Zion. As you can assume based on the problems indicated, this is a challenge. It is a challenge to which we are called, and it has brought us to the development of some new goals.

One goal is to plan more SSTT seminars. As the ZEBS seminars are starting again, we are hoping to be able to find good locations for SSTT seminars as well.

We also are designing a periodical newsletter that

we hope to either print or send electronically to people interested in children's ministry. This newsletter will include encouraging articles for people involved in children's ministry, some teaching helps and an example of a good children's Bible lesson.

Some of the missionaries also have great ideas regarding writing curriculum for the children's ministry. This is in the idea phase and will take time and translation.

Hopefully, these pieces of the puzzle will provide some opportunities for mentoring. Relationships could develop that would involve discussions about the children's ministry leaders' individual experiences. After gaining experience and applying knowledge, these amaZioni people can be trained to lead their own mentoring groups for children's ministry.

A logo has been created and can be used on all the literature for the "Children of Zion" ministry. The logo is an image of a flaming torch. The symbolism is that of possessing the light (Truth) and then sharing or passing on the light to others. The logo expresses our desire as missionaries to share the Truth with the amaZioni and train them to share the Truth with others in their sphere of influence, whether is in a children's ministry, women's ministry, at home or at church.



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As you can ascertain, the potential is great, and the workers are few.... There is a Children's Ministry Internship available to those who are interested in spending some time with us ministering to children and children's ministry leaders. The ZEMA website has the details

<https://zema.org/Sunday-school-teacher-training/>

—Article Contributed by Carrie Seelhammer