

FOCUS NEWSLETTER

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Home Office Report

Greg & Carlene Seghers

Thank you! ...To the many people who have encouraged and supported ZEMA and our ministries overseas. Marius and Nozipho Swart have been visiting churches and sharing about ZEMA's ministries in the USA since September 18th. They, along with us, the Pinters, Emanuelsons, and three Moody interns, participated in the missions Convocation at Christ Community Church in Zion. The Swarts and Seghers also shared about ZEMA's ministries at East Troy Bible Church for their missions emphasis weekend. The four of us also represented ZEMA at Moody Bible Institute's Career and Internship Days this month. We are thankful for the great conversations we had with students there. Please pray that the Lord of the Harvest will raise up workers to join ZEMA's ministries.

Greg and Carlene are teaching the intercultural engagement class at Moody Bible Institute again this fall. Twenty-nine students meet for 3 hours every Wednesday. We like to have guest speakers and activities that demonstrate the concepts and skills needed to share Christ and relate to people from different cultures. Please pray that we share this message clearly and relevantly.
The Seghers will be traveling to Seattle, Washington, in October for MissionFest 2026. At this mission conference, they'll lead two workshops. At a workshop entitled From Syncretism to Salvation, we'll share the story of how the amaZioni movement came to be and how ZEMA is able to share Christ with the Zionists in Southern Africa. At another workshop, Christ in the African Context, we'll discuss what syncretism looks like, how it skews African theology away from Christ, and how it traps African people in a cycle of poverty. In this seminar, we'll also address how Christ is good news to Africans when we walk together, affirming what it is to be both: African and Christian.

Greg and Carlene will be at the First Baptist Church in Sycamore, IL, for their missions conference in November. Our schedules have been very full with events and relationship-building. It is a privilege to walk with others and participate with Christ as He builds His Church. Please pray that in these busy days, we will rest and rely on Him.

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Transforming Grace:
How the Gospel is Changing Hearts in KwaZulu-Natal, South Africa



Pastor Sipho Mfusi grew up in KwaZulu-Natal (KZN) in a traditional Zionist church, but despite faithful attendance, Baba Mfusi had never heard the message of the Gospel. "Sunday after Sunday, I would go to church, as part of the practices of the family, not because of any relationship with the Lord Jesus Christ," says Mfusi.

This casual acceptance of church changed into a deep bitterness when Baba Mfusi's first wife passed away in 2002, despite Mfusi's prayer and fasting. Mfusi had been taught, "If you do a lot of good works and accumulate them, God will remember those good works when you're in trouble and then show up." But when his first wife died, everything changed. "I think it's an understatement to say I questioned God," says Mfusi. "I hated God. Because now I said, 'Where are all my good works? Why is God not showing up for me?'"

Although Baba Mfusi did not know it then, the God he was so bitter toward was orchestrating a way to touch his heart with the message of God's love. Baba Mfusi and his new wife, Lungi, first heard this message while they were in Australia on an assignment for the company Mfusi worked for.

Baba Mfusi says that, while in Australia, Lungi would not stop "nagging" him to go to church with her, so one Sunday they ended up at a Presbyterian service. Here, Mfusi heard a message that baffled him: "[The pastor] said something I'd never heard in all my life...when you repent of your sins and put your trust in Jesus Christ, God treats you like you've lived the life that Jesus lived of obedience."

The words wouldn't leave Mfusi's mind and kept bothering him, so they went back the next week. The message was the same and it struck Mfusi's heart: "To say that I can be forgiven--one time he even said sins you've committed in the past, and the last sin that you're going to commit before you die, all those things God has taken them--nailed them on the cross in the name of Jesus--and you will come before God perfect, because the righteousness of Christ is being imputed to you."

Initially, Mfusi found the words suspicious, but as they continued to listen to the teaching of God's Word, he began to know they were true. In 2006, both Sipho and Lungi accepted Christ as their Savior.

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Pastor Mfusi says he began to feel a great burden on his heart for the people back in his home who had never even heard this message of salvation in Christ. At first, Mfusi wanted to find a different young man, help pay for his training, and send him back to South Africa as a missionary. But Mama Lungi had other ideas. She would not let Mfusi look for someone else to send back but said, "The desire is in your heart, not his. We must go."

The question that so plagued Mfusi after his first wife's death, "Where are all my good works?" was answered in the Gospel he first heard in the Presbyterian church: our good works are filthy rags, but the righteousness of Jesus covers them all. This Gospel so radically changed Mfusi's heart and life that he could not remain silent while his people at home went on without ever hearing it. Mfusi took a position in the US and moved there with his family for the three years it took to raise enough money to pay for Bible College.

Returning to South Africa, Mfusi attended George Whitfield College in Cape Town. Graduating in 2016, he returned with his family to KZN, where they led Bible Studies in Mama Lungi's grandfather's home.

"I wanted to teach about God," Pastor Mfusi says. The Zionist church the Mfusis grew up in still practiced animal sacrifices and worship of the ancestors, traditions which the Mfusis now knew were not Biblical or in line with the Gospel: "Many of the Zionist doctrines... I notice [are] because we don't know who God is. We think that God can be fooled with our filthy rags and that God is like the ancestors." This is what drove Mfusi to proclaim the Gospel and teach people how to study the Word of God.



Pastor Mfusi was first introduced to the ministry of ZEMA in 2015 through TEAM missionaries and ZEMA partners Carol and Bruce Britten. Mfusi says he was blessed with the Zulu Bible and theology resources he was given access to: "I was really shocked that I didn't know about this and it was something that I was looking for." Now, rather than trying to translate portions of his textbooks into Zulu, he had access to multiple complete resources already in his people's heart language.

The more Pastor Mfusi taught, the more skeptical the church leaders became. Mfusi says they soon realized the message he was preaching was different from the tradition they held to. In 2017, the Mfusis were falsely accused of stealing money from the Zionist church and were thrown out.

Transforming Grace:
How the Gospel is changing hearts in KwaZulu-Natal, South Africa



The next Sunday, 51 people showed up to the Mfusis' own small service, eager to hear more about the Gospel message. In November of 2019, they formally constituted the church: "We call it the Reformed Zionist Church of Christ." Seven years later, the church is still standing by the grace of God.

The Reformed Zionist Church of Christ meets in a small concrete building nestled in the sloping hills of Estcourt. The doors open onto a grassy parking lot where kids play soccer after church under the warm African sun. Every Sunday at 2 pm, the congregation gathers to raise their voices in song and declare the truth of God through liturgy and teaching from Scripture.

"If we were to use the kids' language, who is the hero of this whole story?" asks Pastor Mfusi. "From the time when my wife died, when I made a turnaround...I didn't have the education to go to Australia, but God just opened the door; I only had grade 12. I was in the United States and back, Bible College, back here, ministry opportunities, partnership with ZEMA, with ZEBS: the hero of this whole story isn't me, because I couldn't orchestrate all of this. It's all glory to God!"

The majority of the church's congregation consists of children accompanying their friends to Mfusi's service after attending their parents' Zionist or Shembe services. The Reformed Zionist Church of Christ is located in what Mfusi calls "one of the strongholds of Zionism and Shembe." Shembe is a syncretistic African religion: "...they reject the Lord Jesus Christ," says Pastor Mfusi. "They believe that the Lord Jesus Christ came for white people." Those who follow the Shembe believe they are following "the messiah for blacks."

Sipho and Lungi thank God for the opportunity for these children to hear the Gospel. "I look at my life and my wife's life, and it was only when we were adults that we heard the Gospel for the first time. Whereas these kids, from very early stages of their lives...[are] hearing the truth at a very early age," says Mfusi..

Along with his work at the church, Pastor Mfusi also teaches at ZEBS in Estcourt and Pietermaritzburg. Mfusi desires to walk alongside the ZEBS students even after they graduate, knowing that many of them will also be cast out of their churches and families for the sake of the Gospel. Pastor Mfusi asks for prayer that they would all remember the sufferings of Jesus and of the apostles and "that the Lord would keep us faithful in teaching the Word and also in living godly lives."

Transforming Grace:
How the Gospel is changing hearts in KwaZulu-Natal, South Africa

Things have not been easy. The Mfusis know this fact well, as they walk through personal health struggles, the sorrows of people rejecting the Word of God, the reality of spiritual warfare and the difficulties of laboring daily for the sake of the Gospel. Yet, in Jesus, the Mfusis have found a life and goodness that surpasses any earthly comfort and provides joy and peace beyond any circumstance: "If you really don't look at the Scriptures, you will be angry and vindictive, but those things [in Scripture] keep us going," Pastor Mfusi says. "So pray that we will continue to depend on the Scriptures and to know that these things are meant to strengthen us. Jesus is...eternally sitting on the throne."

Pastor Mfusi says they are committed to sharing the Gospel, despite challenges. The Gospel is for all. For all who, like Mfusi, have wondered whether their good works will be enough to merit God's favor, have been bitter with hatred at the God who did not come through as they expected, or have gone to church because it is tradition, yet know something is missing. The good news of God's love in Jesus Christ and His grace covers all our "filthy rags." May the Lord continue to cause this good news to bear fruit and change lives, in Estcourt, in Africa, and in every corner of the world, to the glory of His name.



Ways to Pray:

- **Pray for Sipho and Lungi Mfusi and their family, that God would help them to "live godly lives," as Pastor Mfusi says, and remain faithful to Him.**
- **Pray for perseverance and provision as the Mfusis navigate Pastor Sipho's bone cancer.**
- **Pray that Zion churches, such as the Reformed Zionist Church of Christ, will remain faithful to God's Word, and that God will raise up more people to join in His work here.**
- **Pray for protection and a true understanding of who Christ is in the younger generation. Pray that the community will change because of the change in the youth who know and love Jesus.**
- **Pray for support and accountability for the ZEBS students as they study and after they graduate.**
- **Pray for the other believers in South Africa, like the Mfusis who are faithfully following Jesus where He has put them. Pray for the churches to remain strong, for the Gospel to go forth, and for the Father to send more workers into the harvest.**

Meet ZEMA Board Member

Ron Christiansen



Ron was born in Rhodesia (Zimbabwe), Africa, to missionary parents. Ron has served as a pastor in rural, suburban, and urban ministries for 34 years. His heritage and experience have given him an informed perspective and a welcoming heart for people of all generations and cultures. Ron and his wife, Kathy, currently live in East Troy, WI, where he serves as the senior pastor of East Troy Bible Church.

Ron and Kathy have been married for 32 years and have four children: Grace, Caleb, Caroline, and Libby. His daughter Grace (28) teaches Classical English Literature and History in Austin, TX. His son, Caleb (27), is a professional trombonist at the US Military Academy at West Point. Caroline (24) graduated from the University of Wisconsin-Whitewater in 2025, and Libby (17) is a high school senior.

Ron is deeply interested in international church-to-church connections. He values the mission agency as a networking resource and actively facilitates missional and discipleship partnerships for a Christ-centered African Church. Ron and Kathy are fostering a church-to-church relationship between East Troy Bible Church and the Apostolic Fellowship Church in rural Zimbabwe. The AFC is an African Independent Church, and Ron and Kathy have provided discipleship and Bible-study resources. Pastor Ron and his brother Jon co-authored a four-year children's camp curriculum with several Zimbabwean pastors and their wives.

In his free time, Ron enjoys his dogs, Sadie and Ruby, cycling, and playing trombone with his son. He also loves photography, reading, and illustration. Ron is a musician and serves as Principal Trombone in a semi-professional symphony in Beloit, Wisconsin.

Important End of Year Receipting Information:

- **Printed receipts are expected to be mailed by January 29th, 2027.**
  - **Please be aware that due to potential postal service delays, it may take several weeks to receive them.**
- **If your email address is available, emailed receipts will also be sent by January 29th, 2027**

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