

He
is
Risen

MATTHEW 28:6

Focus Newsletter

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A Letter From The Home Office

BY GREG AND CARLENE SEGHERS

Watch to see where God is working and join Him... We don't choose what we will do for God' He invites us to join Him where He wants to involve us... [and] will move us into every assignment that He knows we are ready for...

~ Henry Blackaby, Experiencing God

As Home Office directors, we watch, wait expectantly, and trust God to move us into relationships as He directs. Most recently, our movements have surrounded students and faculty relationships at Moody Bible Institute's Missions conference and an Internship/Career Fair in February. During the Missions Conference, Greg, Carlene, and; Matthew Kuehl spoke with many students about opportunities to share Christ with the amaZioni. We also had opportunities to minister to the students and share their hearts, passions, and journeys to follow Christ.

The opening plenary for Missions Conference was especially encouraging. Defining ethnodoxology, Dr. Robin Harris's message resonated with the heart of ZEMA's ministries. She advocates that living in mission is most effective when we seek to present God's Word and the worship of our Creator through means that embrace the heart of the host culture through ethnic and linguistic expressions of worship. Additionally, Greg and Carlene spoke at three workshops: two, "Balancing Family, Friends, and Ministry", and one, "Healing While in Ministry".

We enjoyed connecting with the students looking toward careers in ministry and those interested in internships. Two African students are particularly close to our hearts. These young people have a heart for the African Church and want to see Christ-honoring relationships in the African context. Several young people came to thank us and interact further regarding the workshops and circumstances of their lives that they continue to process through. We also enjoyed connecting with many of the students from the cultural engagement class we taught last fall and are thankful that our Israeli student was able to return to classes in January. One thing we have been amazed to encounter is how brokenness and abusive circumstances are a common thread in people's lives. Yet, we're touched and praise God for the students' love, faith, and genuine trust that God goes before them to be ministers of healing while they are still on a healing journey themselves.

We're thankful for these opportunities, and though we don't know the result, we believe God has invited us, and you, into the work of Kingdom building, one relationship at a time.

Serving our King,
Greg and Carlene Seghers

Prayer Opportunities

Pray for those who gave us contact details as we connect further to hear how God is leading them.

Please pray for K.... and Sh.... as they each consider what their life should look like when they return to Africa.

Pray for God to build His Church among us and the amaZioni in Southern Africa.

Short Term Mission Trip Team Leader Perspective

BY KEITH MCILHANY



NorthBridge Church has been partnering with ZEMA to reach amaZioni for more than nine years. In August 2023, I led the second trip from our church to South Africa. This trip was a special time serving pastors, students, teachers, and missionaries with ZEMA.

With me on the trip was Caleb, my son and a student at Trinity University; Becca, a nursing student, and Caleb's fiancée; Lisa, a recently retired school administrator; and John, a seminary student at Trinity and pastoral intern at NorthBridge. Greg and Sara Akers were our host missionaries; we also spent time with their mentors Luaan and Susanne Goosen.

We did a lot of driving between East London, where we stayed with a few church members, and the rural townships we went to. There, we visited eight schools and shared Jesus's love and message through music, testimonies, and preaching of the Word. I estimate we were with nearly 2000 students. We also participated in two different ZEBS classes. John, Caleb, and I each did some of the teaching along with Greg and Luaan. We also enjoyed being in several other services or classes where we worshipped and shared testimonies and music together. We really enjoyed the singing and the eagerness of people to learn the Word of God.

As a trip leader, I was challenged to take this next step of spiritual growth and trusting God. I was blessed by the team as they used their gifts and talents and flexed with unplanned requests to speak or sing. The long drives gave us a lot of time to learn about South Africa and the culture from Greg, Luaan, and the local pastors we were with. Near the end of our trip, they shared that our visit and message helped them open doors into local schools where they will continue to speak and pray.

We could not have been better cared for by our hosts during the trip. We came home with full hearts for the people we met and the ongoing work of ZEMA. Many of you prayed for us during the trip, and we felt and appreciated those prayers. There were times when we were very aware of spiritual darkness and resistance to our message. But we knew there was much prayer sustaining us and trust that many seeds were planted.

We did a Facebook group with updates during our trip. If interested, you can still visit our posts and pictures. You may request to join this group. <http://bit.ly/NBSA2023>

Short Term Mission Trip A Missionary's Perspective

BY GREG AKERS



Kumnandi ukuba lapha - It is nice to be here. This is an often-repeated phrase by preachers here, and receives a hearty, “Amen!” from the audience. Several weeks ago we received a 5-person team from Northbridge Church in Antioch, Illinois. Right off the bat, our plans had to be adjusted and they learned that flexibility is a key component of the work, and they exhibited a tremendous amount of grace and patience as plans sometimes went as intended, and sometimes did not.

During the ten days the Northbridge team was in the Eastern Cape, we went to eight schools, speaking to about two thousand children, teenagers, and teachers. At each school the gospel was boldly preached, and clearly and creatively explained. We thank the Lord for the focus He gave to the members of the Northbridge team as they spoke and sang. They also attended and taught at two ***This We Believe*** classes, two ZEBS classes, led a Zion Church service, and celebrated a graduation and baptism service for a ***This We Believe*** class. Through these different experiences I was reminded again about the spiritual warfare which is so active here. We encountered many witchdoctors who are teachers and principals in these schools. Many children we could see were wearing beads or animal skins around their wrists, necks and ankles - signs of their involvement in witchcraft. One of the schools has a problem with bees - there is a large hive of them under a shipping container which is a food distribution point for the students; but because a number of the staff are witchdoctors, and African Traditional Religion views bees as visitors from the spiritual world, the bees are not to be removed. This has resulted in much unnecessary pain for the students. The schools are also a target in the community for theft. Just before our arrival at one of the schools there had been a robbery and two laptops had been stolen. The school leadership (a number are witchdoctors) were accusing the cooking staff of being involved in the robbery. There was much strife. As the Northbridge team shared the gospel message with the school, those cooking ladies were listening. We prayed after the message that God would show His power and glory over this robbery. Just a few days later, one of the robbers was arrested and the laptops seized and returned to the school. The cooking staff was vindicated.

Short Term Mission Trip A Missionary's Report

BY GREG AKERS --- CONTINUED



Their words to Pastor Johannes Mokoena, our ministry partner in the community there, were: “Now we know that your God is real.”

While we cannot know all the ways the teaching and the preaching of the gospel affected those who heard it, it is encouraging to hear these sorts of stories. And in the absence of hearing them, we know that they are still happening because the gospel is the power of God for salvation. As we preached, and continue to preach the gospel, we commit our work to Him who grows what is planted. And of this good news we are appointed heralds, and we herald with joy and anticipation not because we see the fruit now, but because we know Whom we have believed, and are convinced that He is able to guard that which we have entrusted to Him for that day (2 Timothy 1:12). So we say with enthusiasm, KUMNANDI UKUBA LAPHA! - IT IS NICE TO BE HERE! The gospel work is going ahead, the Church is growing and God's glory is being declared in the places of darkness and rebellion. Our King is Sovereign, our Saviour is Victorious, our glory is sure. Kumnandi ukuba lapha!

Thank you for your continued support, your prayers and kindness to us. Thank you to the Northbridge Team for the blessing you were to us.

MEET ZEMA'S NEW BOARD CHAIRMAN

Mike has more than 30 years of experience as a business leader and 20 years of experience as a professor and instructor in higher education. He has leadership experience in large and small corporations. Mike's fields of expertise include economics, business strategy, information technology, and international business. He has served several NPOs as well as led on their Boards. Mike considers it a privilege to have taught in higher education institutions in the USA, China, and Africa.

He became a member of ZEMA's board in 2020, served as vice chairman in 2023, and accepted the role of ZEMA's board chairman in 2024. View Mike's complete biographical profile at his LinkedIn address:

<https://www.linkedin.com/in/mike-gibbs-0b152536/>



MIKE GIBBS

Alternative Energy Project

Update & Thank You!

A Huge THANK YOU to those who have responded to our request for extra assistance to ZEMA ministries by helping to provide funding for ZEMA projects.

Currently, Loving InDeed has matched the incoming donations for the Alternative Energy project, and we have raised a total of \$5000! Loving InDeed will continue to match funds up to an additional \$2500 which would bring the total amount raised to \$10,000. Are you able to assist in this way?!

Please note: All ZEMA missionaries rely on faithful donor support. Any donation toward ZEMA projects, such as this, should be over and above your current giving commitments. We are grateful for 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 this project and why alternative forms of energy have become necessary in South Africa.

Loving InDeed is a charitable organization whose purpose is to partner with like-minded not-for-profit ministries to improve the quality of life for at-risk people spiritually, mentally, and physically through the completion of self-sustaining projects.