

Africa Report - 1999

The Mission

The purpose for this trip to Africa was several-fold. First, because there are several men of God in southern Africa for whom Bruce Mitchell provides apostolic oversight, each year he makes a trip to South Africa to meet with them. These include: Brian Sweetlove, a South African who pastors a home fellowship in Bloemfontein; Mark Hilhorst, a young apostle from South Africa; Dickson Monaheng, an apostle from Lesotho and the founder of Zoe Bible Church; and Terry Thompson, an American who has been ministering in South Africa and Lesotho since 1988. Our base of operations was Brian's home, and whenever we were there we ministered to the fellowship that meets there.

Secondly, it was on our heart to minister to the church in Lesotho. Following elections last October there was extensive rioting, looting and destruction in Lesotho sparked by the party that lost in the elections. Peace has been restored, but only by the presence of South African army forces. This has left a deep scar on the nation and the church there, and it was our desire to minister to the saints.

The next purpose was to water the seed which apostle Mark was planting in Zambia. God has opened opportunities for Mark to build relationships with many pastors in several cities in Zambia, and it was our desire to share the vision of the church that God has imparted to Bruce that the churches there would be strengthened. This vision has been incorporated into a seminar entitled "The Relational Church", which conveys a concept that God desires to build His church on the basis of relationships, not institutionally. The church is not a building, it is the Body of Christ, and when we "join the church" it is not so that we become members of an institution, but rather are joined through covenant relationships with other members of the body to build the church of Jesus Christ. Where these concepts are being implemented we are seeing the church grow, both in numbers and stability.

Finally, there was an unusual opportunity opening to minister in Israel. Ken Koontz, one of the men from the US that Bruce gives apostolic oversight, has begun an apostolic work to build the church in Israel, particularly among the Arab believers. Our purpose there would be to become known to some of the church leaders and begin to build relationships among them. The environment, both political and spiritual, in Israel makes it difficult for an institutional church to function, and as a result the church has not flourished. We want to lay the foundation so that in the future we may share the relational church concepts with the believers so that the church will grow.

The Itinerary

Bruce and I left the U.S. on Saturday, February 13 and after a short layover in London, arrived in Bloemfontein, South Africa on Monday afternoon. After ministering Monday and Tuesday evenings in Brian's home, we traveled to Lesotho to minister at the Zoe Bible Church conference. Since Zoe has multiple worship locations scattered throughout Lesotho, they regularly have conferences so that the entire church can come together. The conference was held Thursday through Sunday, Feb. 18-21.

Following the conference we returned to Bloemfontein and prepared for the Zambia/Congo part of the trip. The ministry team for this part of the trip consisted of Bruce, Mark, Terry, Dickson and myself. The plan was to present the Relational Church Seminar in three cities in Zambia -- Chingola (Feb 26-28), Solwezi (Mar 2-4), and Mufulira (Mar 5-7) -- then cross into the Democratic Republic of Congo (formerly Zaire) to present the seminar in Lubumboshi (Mar 9-11). It would not be all work, however, since the return trip to South Africa included a layover at Peter and Caroline Hilhorst's (Mark's parents) and a day trip to Victoria Falls on Saturday Mar 13.

Since the travel and schedule in Zambia was physically demanding, so it was decided that some of the team would make the trip to and from Zambia by air. However, we would still need a vehicle while there, so another part of the team would drive. The plan was to drive Mark's VW minibus to Mark's parents home in Livingstone, Zambia, leave it there and drive Peter's 4x4 Isuzu the rest of the way. The driving team would leave on Feb 23 and arrive in Chingola sometime during the evening of Feb 25. The return trip would then be the reverse.

After a day or two of rest and ministering to the home fellowship in Bloemfontein the African part of the trip would conclude with a three day mini-retreat at a nearby facility with the men to whom Bruce gives oversight (Mar 17-19).

The ministry trip for Bruce and myself would conclude with a day of travel from South Africa to Israel, six days in Israel, Mar 24-29, and the return trip to the U.S. on Tuesday, March 30. Just before we left the U.S. in February, however, our understanding of what we would be doing in Israel changed. As it turned out, Ken Koontz was going to be a part of a Gerald Derstine Holy Land tour during that period, so it was decided that upon our arrival we would join the tour.

Experiences

There were several noteworthy experiences along the way.

The Drive North

Early in the planning phase for the trip I had expressed a desire to be a part of the team that drove from South Africa to Zambia. The route that was planned would be west from Bloemfontain to Kimberley and north through Vryburg to Botswana. We would enter Botswana at either Lobatse or Gaborone and spend the first night somewhere north of Gaborone. The next day we would drive the rest of the way through Botswana, cross into Zambia at Kazangula and spend the night with the Hilhorst's just outside Livingstone. After transferring vehicles we would spend the third day driving from Livingstone to Chingola, arriving in the evening. Altogether the trip would be about 2700 km (1700 miles).

It was not my expectation that I would be doing much driving, since I was unfamiliar with the roads, etc., and because in all the countries through which we would be driving they drive on the left, as in England. However, Mark was not able to locate some men to do the driving, and it therefore fell to Dickson and myself to be the team.

We got a late start on the 23rd and did not leave Bloemfontain until noon; but because Dickson needed to get his international passport we first drove to Ladybrand, just outside Lesotho, and back, a distance of 300 km. As a result we did not leave for Kimberley until 3pm. Since it was a nice road between Bloemfontein and Kimberley, I took over the driving duties to get used to the different perspective.

It was indeed different. If you have ever sat in the passenger seat and tried to teach someone to drive you can get a feel for the different perspective and how hard it is to judge where both the edge and the center line of the road are. In addition, traffic is coming from the other side. I was having difficulty keeping the car in the center of my lane; I kept letting the car drift to the left, and several times the car drifted to the shoulder.

This was not a serious problem, however, until we were entering Kimberley about 5pm. We needed to pickup a new highway there, and as I was looking for a road sign, I was not paying close attention to the car. As we rounded a curve in the road the car drifted to the left. Just then, instead of being a shoulder, curbing started. I hit the end of the curb and blew out both tires on the left side. God was faithful, however, and in about an hour we had the spare on the front and an new tire on the back. One of the rims was not useable, however, so we did not have a spare.

I continued to drive, and we reached the border post at Lobatse at 12:30am. We found that crossing closed, so we continued to the Gaborone crossing, which I had been told was open 24 hours. Arriving at 3am, we found that crossing also closed, so we slept in the car for a few hours.

The border crossing did not open until 7am, and we did not leave Gaborone until about 8am. We had almost 1000 km to the border crossing into Zambia, which closed at 6pm, so we were extremely tight on time. As it turned out, driving as fast as possible, even 90-100 mph at some points, we did not make it. We arrived at 6:15, and so had to spend the night on the Botswana side of the border. The only place to stay was the Mowana Safari Inn on the Chobe River, a beautiful place, but expensive.

We got up early the next morning and had cleared immigration and customs in Botswana by 6:45am. The Zambesi River forms the boundary between Zambia and Botswana, and the only way across is a ferry. By the time we had waited for the ferry and cleared Zambian immigration and customs it was about 8:30am, and we arrived at the Hilhorst's about 9:30am.

After switching vehicles and spending a couple of hours there we left for Chingola. The Isuzu Trooper 4x4 was a bit different, since it was a left-hand drive car, as in the U.S. This left Dickson very unsure of driving, while it made me much more comfortable; so I did all the driving in Zambia. We fueled in Livingstone and left there at noon. We arrive in Lusaka, the capital of Zambia, about 5:30, fueled and got supper. By the time we left Lusaka it was getting dark, and we made the rest of the trip at night.

Driving at night presented a few problems. The biggest problem was uncertainty at times that we were on the right road, particularly when we went through a city. We found the Zambian people to be extremely friendly, however, and never hesitated to ask any of them directions, even late at night. We arrived in Chingola after midnight, and since we had no idea of what the city was like we stopped the first people we saw and asked about using a phone. After a little time we were able to make phone contact with Pastor Vincent Kapungwe, who met us and led us to where the team was staying, which was at a Girl Guides (like our Girl Scouts) guest house just outside of town.

God was faithful. Altogether, we traveled through 3 nations and covered almost 1900 miles in 40 hours of driving, much of it at night, over a period of two and a half days. The only incident of note was the flat tires. We never were lost, nor did we have any unpleasant encounters at any of the police checkpoints, of which there are a half dozen in Botswana (for animal control) and a similar number in Zambia.

A good example of how God kept us occurred at the entry point into Zambia at Kazangula. Since we were leaving the CCA (which includes South Africa) with a car registered in South Africa, we had to get a temporary export permit in Botswana and a temporary import permit in Zambia. This could have been sticky, particularly since I was not the registered owner. It is not uncommon for the Zambian custom officials to check all of the details, including such things as engine numbers, to be sure that people are not bringing cars in to sell illegally.

In our case the engine was in the rear underneath the luggage, including a large box of the seminar workbooks. In customs I declared the books and explained what we would be doing. When he came out to check the engine I showed him one of the books and told him he could keep it. He was so delighted he just let us go without unloading everything. (We did a similar thing, with the same results, at one of the police checkpoints in Zambia.)

In the Congo

One of the most memorable incidents occurred as we tried to enter the DRC (formerly Zaire). The arrangements for the seminar in Lubumbashi, DRC had been made through a pastor in Mufulira, Zambia since Mark had not been able to meet the pastor in Lubumbashi, who was to be our host,

on previous trips. None of us had ever been there before, so it was our understanding that this pastor would meet us at the border.

There was a little delay on the day we were to leave for Congo since we had to drive in the morning to get the visas for some of the team members. As a result we did not arrive at the border until almost 2pm. Clearing immigration and customs in Zambia was no problem, but as soon as we entered immigration in Congo our problems began.

First, there was no one there that spoke more than a few words of English and none of us spoke French, which is the official language. This problem seemed to be solved with the appearance of a man who could act as interpreter for us. He spoke Afrikaans and helped South African truckers to get through customs, and since Mark also spoke Afrikaans there was some level of communication.

Next, the person who we supposed was to meet us was not there, and finally, we did not have a letter of invitation from the local church in Lubumbashi. These two things made it difficult to explain why we were entering the country and where we were going.

What we also did not know was that three Americans posing as missionaries had been arrested two days earlier in Zimbabwe for running guns in DRC, which has been in civil war for many years.

After almost 3 hours it looked like things were all right. The immigration officials indicated that they were going to send a man, who kept our passports, with us to help us locate the church in Lubumbashi, which was about an hour's drive from border. After negotiating the four police checkpoints and replacing a flat tire (we hit a pothole too fast while passing a truck) we arrived in the city at about 7pm. Unexpectedly we found ourselves in the police compound, where we were taken to the reception room on the second floor. The room was on the front of the building and was sparsely furnished with badly worn and uncomfortable chairs and sofas and a metal desk. There was also an entry from the room to a balcony that ran the length of the building. Before long two soldiers armed with automatic weapons appeared and from that point never left us.

At that point it became somewhat apparent that we were under some form of arrest. We sat in this room for 3 hours with no communication from anyone. About 10pm a person who spoke English (we later learned his name was Albert) asked Mark to step out. Mark was interrogated for an hour or so and returned. They then interrogated Bruce for an hour followed by Dickson for a similar period of time. It was almost 2am by the time we were informed that we would be spending the rest of the night there, so we tried as best we could to get some sleep.

By 8am we were up and around, so we stepped out on the balcony for a time of prayer. Soon afterward we were moved to a waiting area on the ground level. Even though there were other people, who apparently had business of one form or another, in that area, we were never without the two soldiers with automatic weapons. One of those people present, a man named Tarsus, befriended Dickson. Tarsus was a Christian, and as he was entering the compound to conduct his business there he noticed us praying on the balcony. He spoke some English and turned out to be a Godsend. Tarsus spent the rest of the day there helping us, talking to the police, getting us some fruit to eat and helping us locate some people in the city. At one point, after he was unable to locate the man we were looking for, he brought his own pastor to talk to the police.

He was also instrumental in getting Mark permission to attempt to locate the local pastor, which Mark was successful in doing. After this pastor came to the compound, however, he denied any knowledge of who we were or that he was expecting anyone. We still do not know why he denied knowing who we were, whether he was afraid or whether the person in Zambia did not do his job.

By mid-afternoon we were informed that we would be released, but only back to the border to leave. Later, they photographed each one of us, side and front views. At this point the only food we had since leaving Zambia was a dozen granola bars that Bruce had with him and some energy bars that I had.

About 6pm, after some delays, we were told to get in the car. Albert was going to accompany us to the border, and he assured us that, although the border was closed, he could get us through. A block or two from the police station I took out my digital camera to take a picture of Tarsus, who was following us on his bicycle. When the police and soldiers saw the camera they went ballistic. The area where we were was highly restricted and cameras were forbidden. They immediately took us back to the compound, amid a great deal of discussion and confusion. Finally, after the camera was confiscated, we all piled back in the car and left for the border in the company of Albert.

We had to make a few stops for Albert to get some things, so it was dark before we left Lubumbashi. It is dangerous to travel the road to the border at night, so when we got to the first police checkpoint it was decided that two soldiers (with their automatic weapons) would accompany us. That meant there was now nine people in the Trooper. In the front was Mark, who was driving, Bruce leaning over the gear shift console, and Albert. In the back seat was Terry, flanked on either side by the two soldiers, and in the rear was Dickson, Sjaak and myself amidst the luggage.

There was a long delay at one of the checkpoints, during which time we got out and moved around a bit. It was a beautiful night, with the Southern Cross and Milky Way clearly visible.

We got to the border at about 9pm, but there was no way that we were going to get across. So we spent the night in a "motel". Mark found a place to buy a loaf of bread, so we got out the peanut butter and had dinner.

Albert assured us that there would be no problem the next day and that we would be processed at 6am. We were up, dressed and ready to go at 6, but Albert did not show up until 8am to take us to immigration. By 10 am, after having our luggage searched a couple of times, we were through customs and into Zambia, where we had to have our luggage searched again.

Altogether we spent almost 2 days detained under armed guard without food or water except what we were able to supply. Later, as we were talking, Dickson revealed that they had made veiled threats of torture during his interrogation.

I have heard others speak of how they were aware of the prayers of the saints back home, but I have never experienced it like during this time in the Congo. During this time none of us felt apprehensive, and there were no complaints, although we were somewhat uncomfortable. We recognized that Tarsus was a Godsend almost from the moment he introduced himself, and it was obvious to us that God was taking care of all the details. Even when I made that terrible blunder with the camera God brought us through.

The Drive Back

We arrived back in Chingola before noon, and the decision was made to leave for Livingstone that day (Thursday) instead of waiting a day. We repacked, and then I took the "flying" part of the team to the airstrip to fly to Livingstone. I returned to the guest house and we packed the Trooper with the rest of the luggage. The plan was to drive to Lusaka and stay that night with some friends of the Hilhorst's, Rod and Lorende Gribnitz. We left Chingola about 2:30 and arrived in Lusaka about 10pm, having stopped to get a spare tire for the Trooper and dinner.

We went to bed at 1am after having a very pleasant visit and bite to eat with them. The Gribnitz's have a lovely home and are most gracious people with a gift of hospitality. In the morning we

were up at 7, had a terrific breakfast and time of fellowship, and left for Livingstone at 10. We arrived in Livingstone without further incident about 4pm.

The next morning (Saturday) we were all up at the crack of dawn for a trip to Victoria Falls. That afternoon and evening we ministered to a gathering of pastors from the area. All of the driving was done in the VW minibus, since it had more room, and there were some signs of engine trouble.

The day after we swapped vehicles on our trip north, Peter Hilhorst left to take it into town to get petrol and had not gone more than a few hundred yards when the clutch failed. In order to replace the clutch the entire engine had to be removed, and there were some indication that something was wrong in the alternator/charging circuit—the alternator light would stay on after starting but would go off in a short while. Since there was nothing that could be done at that time, we ignored it.

The plan was for Dickson and I, now joined by Peter, to leave at dawn on Sunday morning to start the drive back, and the rest of the team would fly to Bloemfontein that day. I was quite happy to have Peter along, and he turned out to be a blessing, not only for his company, but also for his knowledge of the vehicle. I must admit that I had become somewhat apprehensive about driving back, particularly with the unknown condition of the car.

We got through customs all right, but after we got fuel at Kazangula, Botswana, we had to push the car to get it started, since the battery had run down. About 135 km north of Nata in Botswana the car stopped altogether. This was in the middle of 300 km of road where there is absolutely nothing. The consensus was that all we needed was a replacement battery to get us to where we could get the car repaired, which was probably Francistown, 2 hours south of Nata.

The second car to come along, a Toyota with two black couples, stopped and offered me a ride. On the way to Nata we saw some interesting sights: first, three giraffes crossed the road in front of us; a little further we saw a herd of elephants, a cow and her calf on one side of the road and another 6 or so on the other; and thirdly, an ostrich running along side the road.

Nata is a jumping off point for tourists going to the various game reserves in northern Botswana, so it had three petrol stations. Only one of them had batteries, and that one only had two, neither one of which was new. I wasn't sure how the charge was on either one of them, so I inquired about getting them charged. When I verified that one of the other stations had a charger, I purchased one of the batteries and carried it a few hundred yards to the other station. After leaving it charge for a little over an hour, I found a ride back, without much difficulty, with two men in a pickup.

I arrived back at the VW by about 3pm. We installed the battery, and it was good enough to get us into Nata. We decided to stay there the night and charge both batteries overnight. The third station had a pretty good motel and restaurant, so we had a restful night.

The next morning we left as early as we could retrieve our batteries and drove to Francistown. I was good that we had both batteries, since one died before we got there. On our way into town Peter spotted a billboard for a company that services Bosch ignitions, which is what the VW has. We found it after getting some directions, and they had the problem fixed in less than an hour. It seems that when the mechanic replaced the engine he neglected to bolt the ground wire from the starting motor to the chassis, and that wire is necessary to complete the charging circuit.

We left Francistown about 11am and, except for meals, drove straight through to Bloemfontein, arriving at 11:30pm. It was good to be back at the Sweetlove's.

Healing

At the beginning of the driving trip to Zambia I was somewhat naïve, and there were many times when we knew the Lord was faithful to protect us. Nevertheless, there was a great deal of stress added to the unfamiliarity of the surroundings and the pressures of ministry. I think, however, that what really brought it to the surface was the stress I suffered in the Congo experience. The blunder with the camera and the fact that I jeopardized the safety of the entire team was extremely difficult to deal with. I did not sleep well that night at the Congolese border; those events kept coming back.

So I did not approach the return trip with much enthusiasm. What had not occurred to me earlier, but what I was realizing now, was what we were doing carried a certain amount of risk. That was reinforced by an incident that occurred just outside Chingola on our way back.

By way of explanation, the front number plate on the Trooper, which was registered in South Africa, had fallen off on the road back from Solwezi, which was the worst road that we traveled on during the entire trip. Mark was doing most of the driving and had no difficulty explaining at the police checkpoints, where someone noticed the missing number plate, what happened. While we had reported it in Mufulira, we had not gotten an official form.

Between Chingola and Ndola there is a checkpoint that we had been through several times with no problems. This time, however, the policeman was reluctant to accept my explanation and decided to make a case of it. He pulled us over and informed us that the fine was 70,000 quattras (\$30-35) payable immediately. The policeman was talking to us through the window on Dickson's side (the steering wheel in that car is on the left), and since I found it difficult to talk that way I proceeded to get out and come around the car. Before I got there, however, Dickson said some things to the policeman that offended him, and for a moment things were tense. He had the right to arrest us on the spot and impound the car. I apologized and asked his forgiveness, which he apparently accepted, because he let us proceed without paying the fine.

The end result was that by the time I returned to the Sweetlove's I was emotionally stressed and had little time to relax and recoup. We returned late Monday night, and most of Tuesday was spent doing laundry and getting ready to go to the mini-retreat on Wednesday.

Tuesday evening I talked with Brian and vented some of my concerns, but I did not sleep well that night. I put a worship tape in my portable tape player and actually wept myself to sleep. When I woke early in the morning I lay in bed for quite a while and wept some more. I was just emotionally exhausted.

We went to a Methodist retreat facility, where we were to have our mini-retreat, just outside Bloemfontein in the morning. It is hard for me to describe what I was feeling, but I really did not want to be there or to be around others. In addition, I was physically tired.

The opening meeting was scheduled for 10am, but because several of the men that were expected had not yet arrived, Bruce suspended the morning meeting. I went to my room for a bit, but since I was unable to rest, I decided to go for a walk. Maybe the exercise, which I had had very little of, would do me good.

There is very little near the retreat center, and I started up the dirt road that went out into the country. As I walked I began to sing. Then I began to sing in the spirit, and God began to heal my emotions. The more I sang the faster I walked; and the faster I walked the louder I sang; the louder I sang the better I felt. I ended up walking for about 30 minutes, most of it at a good clip, before turning around and starting back. It was past noon when I returned, and I felt great.

My attitude had completely changed. God had healed my soul during that time of praise and worship. That night I slept long and soundly, awakened refreshed and really enjoyed the retreat.

An Upper Room Experience

Our original plan in going to Israel was to meet with Ken Koontz and some of the church leaders among the Arab believers that he is working with. Ken, who has an apostolic vision for the church, is now the next generation of leadership that has come from the fruit of Gerald Derstine's evangelistic ministry among the Arabs in Israel.

As it turned out, however, Gerald Derstine scheduled a two week tour, the second week of which coincided with our visit. Since Ken was very much involved with that, we in essence joined the tour. So we spent three nights in Migdal, on the Sea of Galilee, and the rest of the time in Jerusalem.

It was a good tour, with 31 people in the group, and we had an outstanding tour guide. In addition to visiting such places as the Mount of Beatitudes, Capernaum, and many of the sights in and around Jerusalem, we got to meet some of the Arab believers, both in the Galilee region and Jerusalem area.

One of the traditional places we visited was the Upper Room. While this may not have been the actual site of the place where Jesus celebrated the Last Supper with his disciples, it is in the general vicinity of where it would have been. It is a reasonable sized room, and when we got there we were the only tour group in the room. The standard protocol is to keep things short, so other groups can get in, and quiet, so the orthodox Jews in the synagogue beneath the Upper Room are not disturbed.

We gathered near the center of the room, and Bruce read from John 13. After a time of prayer we began to sing. In the meantime, several other groups had come into the room so that it was almost crowded. (It is hard to say how many people were there, since the number changed, but it was at least 100.) Our group really liked to sing, and after a few minutes it changed from singing a hymn to singing in the Spirit.

It wasn't long before we really began to enter into worship, and the music just flowed. Occasionally I was conscious of the others in the room. At first those around us didn't know quite what to do. There was a man, who I later found out was part of a Mexican group, standing near me, and for a while he just stood there. Then he also started to worship, and more of the people around entered into worship with us. Now the worship was really rising, and more of the others joined in. Some were bowing before Him and many were raising their hands and voices.

After some time, maybe 20 minutes, the Holy Spirit moved on one or two people in our group, including Bruce, to lay hands on and begin to pray for others. In a very short time others came forward for prayer. Almost everyone from a Filipino group lined up in front of Bruce. Since they did not speak English many of them were just putting their hands on their heads to indicate they wanted prayer. Some went down under the power of the Spirit, and at least one woman was healed. It was glorious!

This was absolutely incredible. Gerald Derstine said that he has never seen anything like it in the previous 45 tours he has led. It might have continued longer, but we had stayed much too long in that place and we needed to move on. But it turned out we were not done yet.

As we were going down the long flight of steps leading from the Upper Room to the street below, one of the women with the Mexican group, who was leaving behind us, began to sing a hymn. Her voice was incredible; it was so low and rich that at first I thought it was a man's voice. Our group then gathered around her in the street and continued to sing and worship together for another 10-15 minutes.

Much earlier, during one of the teaching sessions at the mini-retreat in South Africa, Bruce had pointed out a revelation he had been given concerning unity in the Body of Christ. In John 17 Jesus is praying for his disciples (in the Upper Room), and one of his concerns was that we all might be one: “Holy Father, keep them in Thy name, the name which Thou hast given Me, that they may be one, even as We are.” (v. 11) Later, in verse 20 Jesus extends this prayer to all the church throughout all time and repeats his request in verse 21: “that they may all be one; even as Thou, Father, art in Me, and I in Thee, that they also may be in Us; that the world may believe that Thou didst send Me.”

It is interesting that we have sought unity in many different ways: unity in doctrine, government, and culture, but none of these things work. But Jesus gave us the key to unity in the very next sentence: “And the **glory** which Thou hast given Me I have given them; **that they may be one**, just as we are one.”

What we experience in the Upper Room was more than just a nice worship experience. We experienced the unity of the Body in the midst of the glory of the Lord. During this entire time, not a single person asked another where they were from, to what church they belonged, about their doctrines, or even what language they spoke. The prayer that Jesus spoke in that room 2000 years ago was partially answered that day; for a few minutes we were one, just as Jesus is one with the Father.

Ministry

Bruce has been making ministry trips to southern Africa each year for the last eight years. During this time relationships have been developed with a handful of men, primarily in South Africa and Lesotho, some of whom now look to him to give them apostolic oversight. One of Bruce’s on-going purposes in going each year is to minister to each of these men, individually and corporately.

As a team the purpose of our ministry this year, particularly in southern Africa, was three-fold: 1) to strengthen the church in Lesotho and to minister to the saints there, who have just been through such trauma with the riots last October; 2) to water the apostolic work begun by Mark Hilhorst in Zambia; and 3) to water the apostolic work being started by Ken Koontz in Israel and to open new ministry possibilities there. Finally, for myself, it had been a long time since I was involved in an extended time of ministry, and I was looking forward to this as an opportunity to begin a transition to full time ministry.

God has given Bruce a fresh concept that the church is to be built on the basis of giftings and relationship and not institutionally. Bruce has developed this concept into a seminar he calls “The Relational Church.” At the center of this new concept of the church is that we, individually, are living stones that God is using to build His church. To accomplish this God gives each one gifts—gifts of motivation, gifts of ministry, and gifts of the Holy Spirit – that provide us with vision, calling and equipping to do the work of ministry.