

Dignity Report to ReSource on the use of Rooted in Jesus

Summary - January 2015

Areas Dignity is Working

Dignity continues to work through Impact Teams. Both the teams in Central and North Eastern (Luapula) Provinces have grown in members and from the beginning of 2015 each team will begin to function as two teams; Luapula North and South and Central East and West. New team members will work alongside existing team members to help them learn from the experience of others. The North Western (Mwinlunga) team has found its feet this year and will continue in 2015.



Throughout 2014 we formalised our Impact Team training schedule and now hold three "EQUIP" annual training courses covering teaching skills, the characteristics of Christian leadership and basic theology. These respond to the issues we see Impact Team members facing on a regular basis.

We are actively seeking to grow the Impact Teams. As people emerge as natural leaders in their areas we invite them to work alongside our team members for a trial period and to attend our central training sessions. This provides an opportunity for all parties to get to know each other and decide whether it is right to work together.

In the second half of 2014 Dignity followed up new and existing contacts in:

- Zimba and Siavonga (Southern Province)
- Kisangazi and Chipata (Eastern Province, near Malawi border)
- Mabonga and Mpika (Muchinga Province)
- Katima Mulilo (Caprivi strip, Northern Namibia)

The number of Life! Groups meeting has continued to increase and is now at 180.

2014 also saw the shaping of our Life! Skills programme. This is seen as a complimentary strand of our work to sit alongside the core work of Christian discipleship. Our aim is increase skills and knowledge within Life! Groups to better equip them to help their communities and families in practical way. Our intention is to train up additional Impact Team members in certain skills and give them the responsibility of spreading this throughout the Life! Group network. The first Life! Skill we have begun to teach is conservation farming which we are delivering in partnership with Foundations Zambia.

The translation of Rooted in Jesus Book 1 into Lunda has been completed and we are grateful for your care and attention while editing this. We are currently working on translating Book 2 into Lunda and Book 1 into Lozi for use in Northern Namibia and some areas of Southern Zambia.

Expected Work: January - June 2015

During January and February the Impact Teams take a break from their work alongside Dignity. This sits well with the natural rhythm of the subsistence farming year and allows time for them to focus on other responsibilities.

In March, the first EQUIP Impact Team training will take place and will also be used as a planning session to programme work throughout the rest of the year. The key focus for March through to June will be following up with existing Life! Groups. The Impact Team members will take responsibility for visiting areas and arranging to meet with group leaders from different areas. This allows chance to share experiences and challenges and encourage one another. In the second half of the year the focus will shift to planting new groups.

In March we will also run our 'Get Your Hands Dirty' school of rural evangelism, discipleship and transformation. It is likely that this will happen in Chipata, although we are waiting to see whether the required preparations are made by our local contacts. An alternative location may be chosen if the timing is not right for Chipata.

In the background, we continue to work at establishing and deeply rooting the "Dignity Zambia" leadership team as they begin to share the responsibility for planning and leading the work forward within their country.

Testimonies

The story of our involvement with Siavonga is a little different to many of the areas we work in. We have been working with a small, faithful group of people there for over 2 years. It has proved hard for them to plant Life! Groups in the area, perhaps due to the fact that drought often affects the land meaning people can move vast distances to find good land leading to a transient population with lower than average levels of education.

Since we first began working in Siavonga a handful of Life! Groups have begun but have struggled to become well established, eventually coming to an end. However, one group has really taken root and has been running for 2 years with a good number of members. On recent visits, the Impact Team have come across, and challenged, 2 aspects of life for those living in and around Siavonga.

Firstly, the place of women in the community. The Impact Team noticed that women were treated very lowly in the community and that all the work of the Life! Group was being held only by the men. The Impact Team spent time explaining that God desired women to be involved in His work as well as men. Through discussions and exploration, the villages seemed to accept this. We are encouraged to see that some women have now committed themselves to making sure the work of the Life! Group is strong in their area. We hope that this will begin to change the way women are viewed in the wider community.

Secondly, the power of witchcraft. Many people in this area live in great fear of witchcraft. For example, a man recently had a car crash while driving drunk, killing himself and his passenger. The event itself was tragic but the knock on effects have been devastating. Many people believed the man died there because the area was cursed and therefore they simply left the area as quickly as they could. They took with them what they could but left their homes and many possessions behind in fear of staying longer. The ripple effect of this will be huge as families try to rebuild their lives from scratch in a new area.

Fear of witchcraft is a very real phenomenon in this area and our Impact Team worked with the Life! Group to try and help them stand in opposition to this fear. There is not a Life! Group in the village where the tragic accident happened, but we pray that in time, God will raise up His people in the villages across Siavonga to break the stronghold of witchcraft and bring lasting hope and freedom in Him in its place.

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