



November 2011

Summer has arrived! The air is hot and still, temperatures are in the upper 90's, and we are drinking water faster than we can purify it. In spite of this, the jacarandas and flamboyants are full of purple and orange blossoms. Just when you think nature is dead it explodes in color.

While we wait for the rains to begin, APC is winding down, culminating with its first graduation on November 26. During this final term Tracy has continued the basic pastoral counseling issues and skills he began in May. We're calling it Counseling 101! As he has taught subjects on marriage and parenting, several stories of application have bubbled to the surface which have greatly encouraged us.

During a discussion on marriage, Tracy encouraged the pastors to go home and ask their wives open-ended questions in order to practice being good listeners. That evening Pastor Simuyemba asked his wife, "How do you cook such a wonderful dinner?" Because Zambians seldom ask questions of their spouses, his wife replied with suspicion, "Why are you asking me this?" We all had a good laugh.



When Tracy began talking with the pastors about non-Biblical ways of parenting, he was concerned by their lack of response. Had he missed the mark with matters on child-rearing? Were they being impacted? As it turns out, their quietness and unresponsiveness was due to the shame they felt about how they had disciplined their children. One pastor confessed to the class that he regularly slapped his children, at times shaking them violently, for doing poorly in school. He repented of how he had treated his daughter after she brought home poor grades. This pastor humbled himself and apologized to her. Another student confessed that he had knocked his child down so hard that his son had hit his head on the bed, raising a lump on his scalp.

While fathers beat [their word for discipline] their children, mothers berate and chide their children by calling them names. For example, a mother might put the prefix "chi" in front of the child's name, changing its meaning to shame or aggravate the child. Using the rod of discipline in a controlled, calm, and sane manner is something that is new to Zambians. They are slowly breaking old patterns of parenting and developing new ones.

Another pastor, after hearing of television's shaping influence upon children, sat down with his family to discuss their use of television. He warned them about the kinds of programs they watch and about having it on throughout the day. He even went so far as to remove the extension cord to the television to give their family a break. Several of the pastors even expressed concern over TV's effect on their children's academic development. The television programming that streams into Zambian homes is appalling. Family values are learned from foreign soap operas that teach revenge, gossip, poor family dynamics, sexual immorality, and deficient problem-solving habits. Television is typically on from morning to night without any monitoring, and these shows are oftentimes presented in a crass way.

These short stories of God's working in our pastors' lives are a small picture of what God is doing here in Zambia through the labors of Tracy and co-teacher, Steve. As we look over the past three years, we recall other such stories of APC's impact upon the lives of these pastors. Rejoice with us in the graduation of these fifteen men as they enter a new chapter of their lives. And, thank you for partnering with us

Praise—for the successful completion of APC's first class; that APC's container full of books has arrived on the coast of Africa; for God's gifts of good health and strength for the past four years; for growth in grace and knowledge of Christ. **Prayer**—for the new group of APC pastors, as Tracy selects who should be in the class; for grace and strength for both of us to finish this term well; for our support level, which is down by approximately \$400 per month; Tracy is undertaking extra responsibilities since our director is in the States—pray for wisdom to balance his duties and to be effective; for safe arrival of the container of books.

*Hope in God,
Tracy and Karen Singleton*

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