

The Tete Province Church Leadership Seminar

The indigenous church training itself to adopt a biblical worldview

Tuesday, June 12 2012

First full day: stewardship and evangelism



Receiving their Chichewa Bibles



Samson rises to make a point



Abusa Moses teaching on stewardship

Nestled beneath Mt. Zomba, the setting for Tete Province Church Leadership Seminar, sponsored by The Outreach Foundation, could not be nicer. 14 lay leaders chosen by sessions and approved by Abusa Carlos gather for 4 weeks for training on how to be responsible church leaders. The practical lessons are oriented toward making the church missional, not self-serving.



Each day opens with Bible Study, which I lead. Today, I introduced the participants to their new Bibles, gifts from First Presbyterian and Becky and John Bros from the team who were here three weeks ago. Since none of them had ever used a Bible map, we played a game to learn distances Jesus and Paul traveled (they walk the same distances!), and the location of places like Jerusalem, Mt. Sinai, and the Jordan River. Exposing these leaders to tools to help them teach the Bible is one of my goals this week.

Abusa Moses, from Blantyre Synod, led most of our day. The morning topic was stewardship, us to several scriptures outlining a biblical theology and practice

of stewardship. The discussions on how stewardship related to the care of the earth around them, orphans, visitation of the sick, personal hygiene, family, time, and church finances. The basis of the topic was Ps 24:1, "The earth is the LORD's and the fullness thereof, the world and those who dwell therein."

Abusa Moses said, "You must be the first to model good stewardship." By learning these things, these soon-to-be leaders will help their churches be holistic and attractive witnesses of the gospel within their villages. And while the leaders are being challenged to take care of orphans and widows as good stewards, they are learning that charity should not create people who are dependent on the church for everything. "The one who doesn't work should not eat." As husbands, stewardship involves helping their wives and spending free time with them. This, in turn, shows people a new way of living. Mt 5:13 comes to mind, "You are salt of the earth."

Thus, stewardship segued into evangelism during the afternoon. Two biblical principles provide the foundation to evangelism in this training. First, we are obedient without counting the cost. Mt 28:19 and 10:9, charge us to go out and to do so not for personal gain: missional is not optional.

Second, we are prepared, as was Moses (OT), depending on God for our wisdom and strength (James 1:5). The class discussion focused on how they can prepare themselves for this work, both physically and spiritually.

I asked Nedson when they learn how to evangelize and the content. This occurs during a special week of immersion with Mt 10 serving as the model. Following some instruction, evangelists divide into pairs, are each given bicycles, and taken to a rural area to evangelize in several villages. Nedson debriefs with them about their experiences. Immersion happens provided funding is available (1 week costs \$1,200/6 participants). Currently, no funds are available for this training. *The larger issue of funding will be the focus for my final journal entry.*

As the day comes to a close, I am reflecting on words I have heard often from The Outreach Foundation staff and board members. Far from leading the church among the nations, we are honored to come alongside it and assist indigenous leaders where needed. We can be glad for this partnership, and have much to learn from them.

A long day of training: 7:30 AM- 4 PM. Now off to play fútbol with my new friends! In His Name, Tom Boone.