



John & Dawn Elliott



Training workers for the harvest in Zambia



P.O. Box 310102, Chelstone, Lusaka, Zambia
Phone: (260) 21-128-1512 or (260) 97-937-6556

E-mail: john.elliott@agmd.org

Website: <http://www.JD-Elliott.net>

Blog: <http://jd-elliott.blogspot.com>

Pictures: <http://picasaweb.google.com/zimzam50>

Sansamukeni Pabushiku bwa Kufyalwa Yesu!

For the past three months Dawn has enjoyed taking a course in Bemba, the most widely spoken African language in Zambia. The above greeting means, "Be happy on Jesus' birthday!"

You may wonder, how is Christmas celebrated in Zambia? what traditions do they follow? what Christmas carols do they sing? These are hard questions to answer because by American standards Christmas is hardly celebrated at all in Zambia. Yes, Christmas is a public holiday which almost everyone observes. But except for a few stores which put out some Christmas decorations, you could go right up until Christmas Day without being aware it was coming. You can go to many of our churches all through December and not sing a single Christmas song or hear a sermon related to Christmas! A lot of this has to do with the fact that Christianity has only become the religion of the majority of Zambians within the past generation. Forty years ago only about 1/3 of Zambians would have described themselves as Christians while today better than 2/3 do. Zambians have just not had time to develop Christmas traditions of their own, and very few Christmas traditions from the West have arrived here intact. Christmas carols are rarely heard, though you can listen to "Jingle Bells" once in a while on the radio, which makes you wonder what pictures the average Zambians have in their minds when they hear "dashing through the snow in a one-horse open sleigh!"

Zambia is one of many nations in Africa that have become "Christian" in the past few decades, but that Christianity is often quite shallow. Many who call themselves Christian do so because it is socially acceptable, not because they really know Christ as their Savior. **There is a desperate need to train leaders who can lead people to Christ and disciple them**, and that is what we have been called to Zambia to do. One of the leaders we have been privileged to teach is Oliver Banda. He recently started a new branch of an existing church in a rapidly growing community near where we live. We had the opportunity to visit the church on their third Sunday of meeting as a separate group and John was pleased to get to preach to those who had gathered. We thank God for people like Oliver Banda, whom God is raising up to reach the people of Zambia for Him. And we thank God for people like you, who pray and give so that we can fulfill the work God has called us to do in Zambia.

May God richly bless you and your family at this precious time of the year as we remember how the Father sent His Son so that all of us might become His children!



Rev. Oliver Banda & wife (on right) with church

Merry Christmas



The Elliotts