

The Schlehlein Family

Missionaries to the Tsongas of southern Africa

MAY 2013 | LIMPOPO, SOUTH AFRICA

Five Takeaways from a Trip to Zimbabwe

Mike Sarireni and Shadreck Zireva, Limpopo Bible Institute graduates, are now planting churches in their rural villages in Zimbabwe. While most African, Bible-school grads move to nicer towns where they can enjoy a higher standard of living, Mike and Shadreck have stayed in extremely poor areas finding inroads for the gospel as they share the struggles of their people. Three of our church members and I visited them two weeks ago for the baptisms of new converts. Here are a few observations:

1. Mike and Shadreck have used only two methods in church planting: hut-to-hut evangelism and expository preaching.
2. Shadreck's family of five lives in two circular mud huts, each about the size of a single-car garage. Termites burrowing through walls make storing his books and class notes difficult. A tiny solar panel hooked up to a battery provides their only source of power and the nearest hill provides spotty phone reception at best.
3. There was a warm vitality among these believers who have almost nothing. Are many Western churches lethargic because they gorge themselves on entertainment that ultimately squelches a hunger for God?

"Those who sweat in worldly employments, are commonly but cold in the pulpit." -- Puritan William Jenkyn

4. A few hours before the church meal, the ladies were plucking chickens and the boys were slaughtering a goat. Mike's family collects drinking water with a cart pulled by a yoke of donkeys. Our village, Mbhokota, has electricity and clean water, but is still considered poor based on South African standards. But in Zimbabwe, the men from our church felt rich for the first time.

5. Women pastors have led to the feminization of the church the world over and Africa is no exception. Mike and Shadreck need strong male leaders, a matter for earnest prayer.

**"I am a Christian because I believe the promises of
Ephesians 2:8-9." -- New believer at baptism**

Flooded with material and spiritual wealth,
The Schlehlein Five (soon to be six)