

What does it take to transform the world?

A report from Jon Witt on Rooted in Jesus in N Zambia, June 2009

It's not an easy question to answer. Even if you can answer that question, you must then have a strategy of how to go about it.

It seems to me that in this world, people can broadly take two approaches. Firstly, one group may attempt to change the world through using technology, possessions and material items that we would call 'things'. The second group are concerned with people. They recognise that to truly effect change in any community means to see change in the hearts, minds and situations of its people.

I'm firmly in the second camp. I believe in people and their God-given capacity for great things. All of us can love, work and stretch beyond ourselves to make the world a better place for everyone. Most of us if we are honest fight a nagging feeling deep within us that we must count for 'more than this'.



And yet we often find ourselves not doing so. We possess a 'poverty' of Spirit that is frightening at times. For all of our material wealth, (and let's be honest at this time in our world, even that is not a foregone conclusion), we are in some ways very poor.

For those who are materially poor in this world, the potential for great things is the same. Yet material poverty affects them by denying them the tools and opportunity to change the world in which they live. This is enshrined in generations

of poverty and becomes normal. We in turn can deny them this, because we simply don't believe that they can be used by anyone for anything amazing.

Poverty affects all of us no matter who we are. If this world is to be changed through people it seems we have a dire problem. Whether it be spiritually, materially, emotionally or financially, we are poor, unable for a myriad of reasons to rise above that which is normal to achieve something that is beyond normal.

Dignity exists primarily for one reason: to pioneer ways in which our hope in Jesus can transform our lives into ways of loving others.

We believe that all people can overcome their poverty through the transforming power of Jesus. He allows all of us—materially or spiritually poor—to find hope and meaning in loving God and other people. The motto of Dignity is to Live and Let Live, I can't think of a better way to state what it is we do.

This year has seen a lot of change for the work of Dignity. Throughout we have nailed our colours to the mast and believe that it is Jesus and the message of the Christian Faith. Only that has the power to change the hearts, minds and situations of those who are poor, no matter where they are found. Truly transformed people can and will do the kinds of things in their communities that Jesus did.

I hope you enjoy reading this report, and hearing all of the work that the Lord has been doing through everyone who is linked to this work. You'll find details of our newest mission initiative, Life!, short term mission work and how we have supported missions in many practical ways in many nations.

Thank you all for supporting what God himself has been doing amongst us.

Jon Paul Witt,
Leader, Dignity.



The Life! Initiative

In mid 2007, Life! began as a simple thought that the people who are within rural Africa were the very people that God wants to use in transforming rural Africa. They are in fact what the Bible would call Oaks of Righteousness that display the splendour and glory of God throughout their communities. The vision of Life! is to see the rural areas of Africa transformed through the power and practice of the Christian Gospel. Key to this vision are three inter-locking activities:

- 1) Christian Discipleship
- 2) Projects that enable God given leaders the space and time to lead via provision
- 3) Practical community projects that seek to show and demonstrate the love of God.

With this in mind, we began to commit ourselves to exploring the vision throughout 2008. In late 2008, Life! was planted in its first area.

Team member Jo Hardy comments;

Being a part of the Life! team was both exciting and challenging. On a day to day basis we spent time in villages around Chingola, meeting with local people and learning about them, their culture and their walk with God. We sought to discover ways in which we could help them do the work they believed God was calling them to do, not to force our ideas upon them. Overall, the time was one of great encouragement – there was a real sense of God stirring things up in the rural villages.

In January 2009, we took the opportunity to spend some time with the new Life! team that had been planted in Zambia. Three observations encouraged us greatly.

- Firstly, there were stories of how the discipleship course, *Rooted in Jesus*, had greatly changed the lives of some people.
- Then there were the numbers of groups themselves. When we had left in November, five groups existed. This quickly expanded to 15 groups, studying the bible and seeing Jesus transform their lives weekly.
- Lastly, was how the seed capital provided had mushroomed into crops of cabbages and more importantly, the beginnings of a self determination for the leader's own ministry.

The Pastors write:

The first conference in Sekele for *Rooted in Jesus* was held on the 3rd November 2008. There had been ministry and planning meetings from July of that year onwards, both north and south of an area called the Solwezi Road. In November, 15 groups began, numbering about 150 people in membership.

The impact of consistent discipleship using the *Rooted in Jesus* course has been tremendous.

Five of us comprise the Life! Initiative leadership team in the area west of Chingola, and as part of the initiative we have been empowered economically, socially and spiritually to do the work of God.

Therefore we believe our ministry will be effective. We are currently growing cabbages and in the month of March we will begin selling them to raise more funds for projects in the future and to further the work as it grows. We have been investigating starting other works such as beekeeping also. We are grateful to Jon, the team, Fr Cornelius and the people who are supporting the work in the UK.

God bless you all.
Vincent, Ponde, Joel, Caspar and Ranger.



As we look forward to later in 2009 and early 2010, we will be attempting to plant the Life! Initiative in at least two more locations. We've seen how the gospel can spread rapidly and begin to transform rural Africa practically. We very simply want to see more of that.

The team of Pastors from Chingola who are raising support for the first Life! project with their crop of Cabbages.

