

# Pastor Training International

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Teach to Preach

## PTI Prayer & News – September 2007

*'Continue earnestly in prayer, being vigilant in it with thanksgiving.'*  
(Colossians 4:2)

Dear praying friends,

We praise God for many evidences of his good and gracious hand upon our ministry in recent weeks:

- We thank the Lord for the opportunity to meet friends at the stands we had at the Keswick Convention and the Aberystwyth Conference.
- Our last Prayer News mentioned some difficulties that we were having with distribution of books in Nigeria. We are thankful to say that these difficulties have been overcome and we are now getting a number of replies from that country.
- The Lord has been very kind to us in sending gifts with his perfect timing to meet large bills as they arrived. We can say that we have lacked nothing because of his loving care and provision.

### Zambia Conferences during August and September

Thank you for praying for these conferences – the Lord has been very good despite some difficulties.

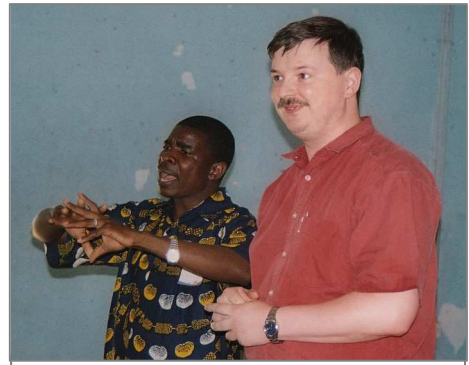


The first conference that we have held at **Mongu**, South West Zambia, was attended by 120 pastors (*shown above*). This was 20 more than we had catered for – but the problems caused by this were overcome. The teaching was very well received, and for the majority it was the first time they had been to anything like this. The teaching on justification, sanctification and regeneration was of much benefit, and the brief overview of the Scriptures was a time of rich discovery of new truths for many. There were many comments upon the importance of the godliness of the pastor's life, which had been set out in the exposition of the pastoral epistles. Sadly it was not put into practice on occasions when it needed to be seen. This brings out the importance of our praying for the Holy Spirit to apply the Word that is taught so that it is lived out in a manner worthy of the Lord Jesus Christ.

Ian Harrison and Alan Levy then travelled up to **Kasama** in Northern Zambia, for what was our third and possibly last visit there. There were 76 at this conference, and for a number this was their first time with us. Some men were amazed that sermon preparation was hard work, while for others the importance of planning one's preaching was a very new concept. The teaching on Romans was appreciated but the doctrine of election was difficult for some who had never been made to think about this truth before. The teaching on the Person and work of the Holy Spirit was *"tough but valuable"* according to one pastor, while another said it was *"tremendous"*. There was a good understanding that all they teach and preach is to be tested by the Word of God, with the Lord Jesus Christ being at the centre of the sermon.

Both groups of pastors expressed a desire for more conferences as well as to receive more books. A number of messages were brought back which testified not just to blessing received from past conferences but from the study of the books as well. Here is what one pastor from Mbala wrote:

*"The conference has been very good to me. The teachings are just what I needed. They are really helpful to my life and ministry... You at PTI have really helped us to grow in the presentation of the Gospel with excellence biblically and consistently. The conferences and the books you are sending are helping us very much. They are helping to interpret the Bible."*



Ian Harrison and his translator in Mongu

After a break of a week, we made our third visit to **Petauke** in South East Zambia. This was led by Peter Seccombe together with Kabwe Kabwe and Gilbert Mubanga. Kabwe has sent us the following report:

*"On Monday we commenced the meeting a bit late due to the low numbers. You need to appreciate that two men had to cycle for a distance of about 100km, basically cycling the whole day and they definitely needed some time to rest a bit before the conference. I was challenged by this kind of commitment and I admire their endurance for the Master's work. One of the men commented and said that "such type of meetings are a rare treat, this is the only opportunity where we listen to the truth faithfully taught – the sad thing is that it only for a week." By evening a large number of brethren had arrived, with bicycles packed all around the small meeting hall.*

*"It is very clear that the past two PTI conferences had left a lasting impact, especially the teachings, fellowship and the books of course – the whole week the men faithfully attended the meetings – with very attentive eyes and faces. I enjoyed the evening sessions of Question and Answers, this gave us a good feedback of where the men were and the issues they were wrestling with. It was clear that the need to train men will ever remain an item for prayer.*

*"Let me just give you some items for prayer:*

- *Please pray for the Covenant College that the Lord will continue to use that ministry. It is very clear that it is perhaps the only Biblical college preparing men for rural ministry.*
- *Pray for the men who attended the conference – that they will put to good use the books and the materials they received from the conference.*
- *Pray for the men, especially those that do not understand English – that they will not be tempted to sell the books but that the Lord provides someone to share the material with who understand English so that they make use of the material profitably.*
- *Pray for wisdom and courage for the men serving God in those rural areas to give biblical answers to some of the sensitive cultural issues that were raised during the conference, especially during the pastoral issues sessions.*
- *Please pray that the Lord gives fruit to this ministry of training men – through PTI it is a great work and a timely one."*

The final conference was at **Ndola** in the Copperbelt, finishing on 14<sup>th</sup> September. Peter Seccombe and the same two Zambian brothers led this conference, but sadly Gilbert, who is head of a family, was called away to another part of the country to arrange a family funeral.

Peter has only just arrived home as we write this letter, but he has given some initial comments. He said it was a very special time for him personally as well as those who attended. A wide cross-section of pastors attended and a very harmonious spirit prevailed throughout the conference. They expressed the benefit of previous conferences and the follow-up that we are able to give. Peter was especially encouraged when a meeting was spontaneously organised one evening to discuss the formation of an evangelical fellowship of pastors for the Ndola area. He had been expounding the letter to the Philippians with its emphasis on unity – perhaps this was the outcome. Praise God for the great blessing of this time together.

- Please give thanks to our God and Father for all the teaching and fellowship enjoyed during these four Zambian conferences.
- And please continue to pray for all those who attended, that they will:
  - understand and accept the truths that they heard,
  - grow in grace and godliness as they put the Scriptures into practice in their own lives,
  - study and benefit from their notes and the books that they have received,
  - keep in contact with us so that we can continue to encourage and help them.

## Ethiopia Conferences, 1<sup>st</sup> - 12<sup>th</sup> October 2007

Next month we plan to have our first conferences in Ethiopia. Gerard Hemmings has had to withdraw from leading these as he is suffering from a voice problem. We are pleased to report that he is making good progress, and we pray that the Lord will put his restoring hand upon him in the coming days.



We are therefore thankful to God that David Sercombe has willingly accepted our invitation to join Ken McIntosh in the leadership of the conferences.

The first one is in **Addis Ababa** beginning on 1<sup>st</sup> October, and the second will be at **Ginchi** to the West of the capital during the following week. Please pray for David and Ken as they prepare for this visit, and for the Lord's care and help as they travel and minister there.

This invitation to visit has come from the Ethiopian Christian Brethren Church. We are thankful for all the help that Mulugeta Ashagre has given us with the practical aspects of these conferences. We have been able to locate some helpful literature in Amharic to give to the pastors who attend. The teaching must be wholly in Amharic, so please pray for Mulugeta and the others who will be helping to translate from the English.

## Burma Link Ministries

During recent months we have spent some time in fellowship with friends from **Burma Link Ministries**. These meetings began at their request and the outcome is that we have reached an agreement whereby their ministry will be combined with the work of PTI. We are grateful to the Lord for his clear guidance in these matters. This gives us the opportunity to expand our ministry into Asia, which has been on our hearts for some time. Another benefit is that **Ken Brownell**, who is pastor of East London Tabernacle, will be joining our Editorial Board. Please give thanks to God for this strengthening of our united ministries.

## Future Conferences

We are seeking the Lord's will for the coming year, and have received an invitation from Mike Webb to go back again to **Sierra Leone** in February. Ken Brownell is planning to visit **Myanmar** (Burma) in February/March and several other invitations are before us. Please pray that we shall know the Lord's clear guidance about where we should go and who should be asked to lead these conferences.

Towards the end of this November, Brian Lotter and his wife will be visiting their native South Africa. While they are there they plan to visit Zimbabwe, specifically to visit the Victoria Falls area where we have been encouraged to hold a future conference. They will also look at the suitability of a farm called 'Shalom', situated between Gwanda and Bulawayo, which has conference facilities. Please pray that they and we will have wisdom in assessing these places and in determining whether it is the Lord's will for us to visit this country again in 2008.

## Books and Letters

Some of the key books that are foundational for our ministry are in need of reprinting. Please pray for the organising of this most important part of our work.

We continue to receive many letters of appreciation from pastors, in Africa especially, as well as a few from Asia. Although we have not included any this time, please continue to pray for this equally important aspect of our work and as we follow up many of the pastors who have attended the conferences this year.

We look back with great thankfulness to the Lord for all that he has enabled us to do, and we trust him to provide for the many and varied needs as we move ahead.

With thanks for your prayerful interest,

*Gordon Oram* – PTI Editorial Board