

OBC in Zambia that is where eleven members and two Floridians from Tampa ministered during the week of April 11 – 16 with Pastor Boston Mwebela at Light House Community Church.

This is an annual pilgrimage that Pastor Norman and Gabi have made for the last seven years, even before coming to OBC from Florida Church in South Africa. Most recently this has been to assist in conducting a pastor's conference in hopes of equipping many bi-vocational men and woman to serve God to greater depths. Many of these pastors have churches in smaller villages and towns all across Zambia and few have every had any formal theological training.

This year was different in that there were multiply tracks of teaching going on at the same time. There was training for children's workers which Vivien Dakpo and Fify Loewen conducted. Unfortunately this was attended by the smallest group of leaders even though 45% of the population is under the age of 15. They taught a program conveyed by Scott Shipes that included lessons with enough curriculum to teach throughout an entire year. Most of the participants were from Light House Community Church. The next group of leaders was considered youth teachers which raise the point that youth can be anyone up to the age of 25. Nyerere (Jay) Obita and Charlotte Ott taught these twenty of so leaders using the biblical stories of Ruth and David. They realized early on that the participants had little biblical training and had limited English understanding. This set a slow and thorough pace of their teaching to avoid confusing or miss-representing the principles of their teaching. They also focused on how to study the bible. Ma Moruti Gabi led four other ladies in ministering to nearly 100 ladies, many the wives of the pastors present. Marjorie Chiwila, Vimbisai Nhundu, Mary Njoroge and April Sukup made the mix and an international one it was. Gabi is from South Africa and the others are from Zambia, Zimbabwe, Uganda and the United States respectively. Each lady spoke on different topics in regards to the principle of the vine as Jesus spoke of in the book of John chapter 15. The ladies shared many stories of life's hardships including desertion by spouse, death of family members, limited incomes and unemployment. Pastor Norman led the pastors teaching along with Bob Cochell from Tampa, Florida and Lenos Ngugi an intern at OBC. Their focus topics were building and delivering sermons, Old Testament survey and raising up the next generation of leaders and a mentoring process. In all teaching tracks there were many questions raised.

The God is Grace Ministry started by Beth Green saw its first 12 graduates of this past year. These ladies had little to no income in the past, some operating a Tuck shop which is a roadside stand offering some basic items like maize meal, cooking oil, soap, beans, peanuts and the like. Now all these woman know how to sew and make simple clothing such as shirts, blouses and skirts. The team had an opportunity to view and purchase many of these items they made. At our celebration service on Saturday the ladies received their certificates and a brand new sewing machine, what tears of joy this brought to them; they danced and sang for quite some time.

We look forward to the opportunity to serve again with Pastor Boston and to how God will grow and work through these many pastors in Zambia. If you would like to be part of the teaching team in future years please contact either Pastor Norman or Jeff Sukup at Open Baptist Church.