

Hear this story from Rev. Murekezi, our Zambia local ministerial partner, on the impact of Empowered by Livestock, Guided by Faith.

Testimony: The Value of Empowering Pastors Through Livestock and Leadership Training

The Free Methodist Church in Zambia (FMCZ) was planted in 1998 by Francois and Annonciata. The first members were Mark and Mary. After 21 years, Mark became the first bishop of the church and now serves as the president of the Southern Africa Area Fellowship. From the very beginning, the leaders of the FMCZ have dreamed of building a self-sustaining church—one where members support their pastors, and pastors can be self-reliant.

This vision is becoming reality through holistic training in both theology and development. Pastors and church leaders are being equipped through studies in John Wesley's theology and courses from Nation-to-Nation Christian University (N2NCU). The church has also launched its own mission agency, the Fund for Integral Evangelism and Leadership Development (FIELD). Church members contribute monthly to FIELD, which has helped purchase a vehicle for a church leader, support church planters, and provide education assistance for pastors' children.

FIELD has initiated several projects designed to become self-sustaining, with hopes of eventually receiving support from local or external donors. Progress is being made step by step.

One of the key developments is the establishment of the John Wesley Leadership Institute (JWLI), started in 2018. More than 25 leaders have graduated, and the institute partners with N2NCU to offer accredited courses. Thanks to the friendship and financial support of Dr. Allen, 30 pastors have been introduced to John Wesleyan theology. From April 28 to May 2, six key leaders—Rev. Doreen (Copperbelt Annual Conference), Rev. Eduard (Superintendent, Kasama/Northern District Mission Conference), Rev. Barnabas (Luapula Annual Conference), Rev. Mary, Pastor Lazarus, and Pastor Annie (Southern Annual Conference)—will begin "Training of Trainers" (ToT) to multiply this teaching in their regions. These leaders were prayerfully selected based on their spiritual integrity, academic strength, teaching ability, and church leadership experience.

The Impact of This Training

The value of pastoral training is already evident:

- Rev. Fabian, once a lay leader at the Blessing Centre in Lusaka, embraced his pastoral calling after participating in leadership training. Now, he serves as the

assistant pastor for our largest circuit in Lusaka (over 400 members), and teaches baptism, membership, and marriage classes.

- Rev. Dickson Musa, Senior Pastor of the Antioch Circuit (the mother church of the Southern Annual Conference), also responded to God's call after completing leadership training. Both Fabian and Dickson are young (in their 40s), and we believe they represent a strong future for the FMCZ. Dickson now serves as General Conference Secretary, a role he fulfills with spiritual maturity and excellence, rooted in his deep relationship with God and theological training.

Additionally, Rev. Dickson's congregation—though in a poor community—supported him with five goats. With care, those goats multiplied to ten. This project has been a vital source of support for his family.

Empowered by Livestock

The vision for livestock projects began in 2019 when the Southern Annual Conference gifted Francois, their superintendent, with a goat. Francois and his wife cared for the goat and later contributed offspring at annual conferences. This personal example inspired a broader vision. In 2023, when Allen asked Francois about sustainable ways to support pastors, Francois proposed the animal project. With the approval of the bishop and other leaders, the program launched.

As a result, 30 goats and 40 chickens were initially distributed. In 2024/2025, a total of 66 goats and 66 chickens were given to 44 church leaders—an amazing milestone, totaling 96 goats and 106 chickens distributed overall.

- Rev. Teddy received five chickens. A year later, he had more, sold some to provide for his family, and enjoyed eggs and meat as well. The presence of eggs even gave his family honor in the community, as they could offer hospitality to guests. Even more meaningful to him was sharing chickens with church members—two families now raise chickens and are respected in their neighborhoods.
- Rev. John and Rev. Francis, who minister in refugee communities, also received goats. Their example has inspired others. Now, even local refugee settlement leaders admire them as self-sustaining pastors who work with their hands rather than relying solely on outside aid. Their integrity and initiative have earned deep respect.
- Rev. Mary Lilema has a special love for livestock and cherishes caring for her chickens. At one point, she experienced a devastating loss of nearly all her chickens. But she testified that God preserved a few, reminding her that He is the

Sustainer of all creation. During the passing-on phase of the project, she gave two chickens to her church secretary, whose family was overjoyed. This act encouraged the entire church. From her experience, I learned that faithfulness shines even in times of trial.

This story is a powerful reminder that when pastors are empowered both spiritually and practically, the entire church—and even the wider community—is transformed. Through theological training and livestock support, we are witnessing a movement of hope, dignity, and sustainability rise across Zambia.