

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, and after 21 years of faithful service, Mark became the first Bishop of the FMCZ. He now serves as the President of the Southern Africa Area Fellowship.

Since the church's founding, our leaders have dreamed of building a self-sustaining church — one where members support their pastors and where pastors are able to provide for themselves as well. This vision can only be realized if pastors and church leaders are holistically trained in both theology and development.

To this end, our pastors and leaders are being trained in John Wesley's theology and through Nation-to-Nation Christian University (N2NCU). In addition, the church has established its own mission agency, the **Fund for Integral Evangelism and Leadership Development (FIELD)**. Through monthly contributions, members have enabled FIELD to fund leadership vehicles, support church planters, and assist with pastors' children's education. FIELD has also developed projects that, while not yet fully sponsored, are slowly progressing and are expected to attract local and international support over time.

One key initiative is the establishment of the **John Wesley Leadership Institute (JWLI)**, launched in 2018. Over 25 church leaders have graduated from JWLI, where coursework is accredited through N2NCU. Through a partnership and friendship with Dr. Allen Wachter, we have also begun offering John Wesley Theology courses to pastors and church leaders. With Dr. Allen's financial support, 30 pastors have been introduced to John Wesley's theological foundations (including 7 pastors who are graduating this year).

From April 28 to May 2, six key leaders and pastors will begin a "Training of Trainers" (ToT) program in John Wesley Theology. These leaders were prayerfully selected for their academic excellence, integrity, teaching abilities, and strong leadership within the church. They are:

- Rev. Doreen (Copperbelt Annual Conference)
- Rev. Eduard (Superintendent of Kasama/Northern District Mission Conference)
- Rev. Barnabas (Luapula Annual Conference)
- Rev. Mary, Pastor Lazarus, and Pastor Annie (Southern Annual Conference)

This will be the first time we are training trainers, equipping them to teach others across their Annual Conferences.

The Impact of Livestock and Leadership Training

Training our pastors has made a significant difference in their ministries and lives:

- **Rev. Fabian** at the Blessing Centre in Lusaka was initially a church leader but, after theological training, responded to God's call to pastoral ministry. He now serves as the

assistant pastor of a local circuit with over 400 members, teaching baptism, membership, and marriage classes.

- **Rev. Dickson Musa** is the Senior Pastor of the Antioch Circuit, the mother church of the Southern Annual Conference, with over 100 members. Like Fabian, Dickson answered his pastoral calling through leadership training. Both pastors are young (in their 40s), providing strong, visionary leadership for the future of the FMCZ. Rev. Dickson was recently elected as the General Secretary of the General Conference — a testament to his maturity, intimacy with God, and strong theological foundation.

Beyond leadership training, **livestock projects** have provided vital support:

- **Rev. Dickson** was supported by his church with 5 goats. Through faithful stewardship, he increased his herd to 10 goats, helping to provide for his family's needs.
- Inspired by the vision of sustainability, **Francois** began a livestock initiative in 2019 after being gifted a goat by the Southern Annual Conference. His success inspired a broader project: in 2024-2025, 66 goats and 66 chickens were distributed to 44 church leaders, totaling 96 goats and 106 chickens shared among pastors and leaders.

Stories of Transformation

- **Rev. Teddy** started with 5 chickens. After one year, he sold some, provided eggs and meat for his family, and extended hospitality to visitors. He even gifted chickens to two church families, spreading the blessing and gaining respect in the community.
- **Rev. John and Rev. Francis** are ministering in refugee communities. They received goats and are thriving. Their success has inspired local respect, even from refugee settlement leaders, showing that pastors are modeling self-sustainability instead of depending solely on outside aid.
- **Rev. Mary Lilema** passionately cared for her chickens, learning valuable lessons in stewardship and God's provision, especially after facing significant losses. Her faithfulness during hardship encouraged her congregation.
- One late **church planter**, a recipient of goats, was inspired by the project to plant three churches in Mazabuka, Monze, and Livingstone before his passing. His legacy of multiplication continues to bear fruit. (Video footage and photos of his livestock were shared during our June 2024 visit to Mazabuka.)

Conclusion

The combination of **theological and leadership training** with **livestock empowerment** is transforming our pastors into self-sustaining, visionary leaders. They are better able to serve their congregations, reach their communities, and model the holistic Gospel message — meeting both spiritual and practical needs.

We are deeply grateful for the partnership with Dr. Allen Wachter and for the vision of "Empowered by Livestock, Guided by Faith." Together, we are seeing dreams realized, lives changed, and churches strengthened for generations to come.