

Farm Work

Supports Zimbabwean Seminary

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Vision becomes reality — Umambo Farms, bird house for Hi-Line laying hens, provides scholarship funds for students with futures as co-vocational ministers of the Gospel.

GraceLife Baptist Church, under the leadership of Dr. Tim Hight and in partnership with IMB and Zimbabwe Baptist Convention, adopted the Ndaou Tribe in 2012. The Ndaou were, at that time, an under-reached people group in the southern part of the country. Ndaou means “the forgotten tribe,” and it seemed to be a fitting description. Over the past seven years, there have been hundreds of villagers who have trusted Christ as Savior, multiple Churches planted and many disciples trained in evangelism, discipleship and leadership.

As a result of these efforts, it became painfully apparent that theological education was lacking for the pastors whom God was calling. There have been several men over the past seven years who believed God was calling them as pastors, but due to a limited theological education were not able to serve in that capacity. That led Pastor Tim to seek out the Baptist Theological Seminary of Zimbabwe (BTSZ) and begin to build a relationship with them. And, in 2015, God did a miraculous thing through this relationship.

Training Pastors

Since 1955, BTSZ has played a significant role in training pastors for the entire southern region of Africa. There have been students from other countries such as Malawi, Zambia, Angola, Mozambique and South Africa. The seminary’s vision is to train men and women to be the hands and feet of Jesus in a broken part of the world. Current IMB missionary and Seminary Dean Nick Moore says, “The biggest obstacle to this mission has been a financial one.”

Nick and Kendra along with their children came to Zimbabwe as missionaries with IMB in early 2016

to serve at BTSZ, training pastors and equipping leaders. When they arrived, they found that the prospect of keeping the seminary open was bleak.

In previous years, the IMB has basically fully funded all faculty and students, including fees and maintenance. In 1994, however, the IMB began a new initiative called “New Directions” in which it focused its efforts almost exclusively on church planting and evangelism. One side effect of this initiative was that the seminary faced an overnight budget cut. For an institution that had been founded and fully funded by outside support, this proved to be a nearly fatal transition.

When the Moores arrived in 2015, the 15 students who remained were unable to pay the school fees. The unemployment rate in the country was hovering at 95 percent, creating a cash-flow crisis, rendering the seminary without funding.

The Vision

Nick and his team began to search for other resources that were available, it quickly became apparent that the seminary had an abundance of land, owning 500 acres. The idea that rooted focused on developing that land from an agricultural standpoint. Nick says, “We were determined to take the resources God has provided and teach Zimbabweans to “fish” for themselves. Through their ingenuity and hard work, we knew that they could.”

Their vision blossomed into what they are calling Umambo Farms, which is Shona for “Kingdom.” In January 2018, the first phase of construction started, building a 2,500 sq. ft. bird house for Hi-Line laying hens. The egg production was a huge success. In July 2018, phase two began with the construction of a second Laying House identical

to the first with the addition of a modified water supply system. The construction costs have been covered by egg production and agriculture partners in the area.

Nick and his team developed an agriculture business that provide scholarship funds for students, who work 20 hours per week in exchange for tuition, housing and meals. According to Nick, this practice is considered “an added value to their participation, giving the students valuable experience and agricultural skills for a future as co-vocational ministers of the Gospel.”

The seminary students are serving as managers, security and general laborers to keep the house in operation. In the meantime, in 2018, enrollment increased to 26 students with 21 of them taking advantage of the new work study scholarship through Umambo Farms.

As of April 2019, 43 students were enrolled in the seminary and most were paying for their training through the new work study scholarship program with Umambo Farms.

Umambo Farms’ tagline is “Umambo Ngauuye,” meaning “Let Thy Kingdom Come,” which is derived from Matthew 6:10. This is a mission Umambo Farms takes to heart, as God has designed his Kingdom to advance on earth as one individual life at a time is impacted. In light of that, Nick asks, “Please continue to pray for BTSZ, as we train pastors and leaders in Zimbabwe. Pray for the continued growth of Umambo Farms, as we endeavor to expand into other agricultural means in order to advance God’s Kingdom.” ■