

D A M O N & L I S A

MATACCHIERA

H O P E Z A M B I A I N T E R N A T I O N A L

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GOD IS BUILDING HIS CHURCH-

Six years ago, as I walked the streets of Chipata, the Lord began burdening my heart for the city I had called home for years. I had spent so much time serving in the villages, yet every day I passed hundreds of people where I lived in the city. I knew many by name and saw them in the markets, shops, and streets. One question kept returning: Who was reaching these people with the truth of God's Word? By then, we had been serving full-time in a village ministry begun in 2011. We were grateful for all God had done there, but we became convinced He was leading us to begin something new in the city. Chipata was not lacking in religion. Dozens of churches could be found throughout the city. Yet many people were not hearing the Gospel clearly, being grounded in sound doctrine, or being taught how Scripture should shape their lives. We began praying that God would establish a Bible-believing church that would proclaim the Gospel, stand upon His Word, strengthen families, and make disciples.

On January 15, 2020, we began a Bible study. There was no core group waiting for us, and hardly anyone outside our family attended. Still, we set out the chairs, opened our Bibles, and began. Week after week, people started coming. Eventually, thirty to forty people joined us each week. Because the study met during the week, people could attend after work and continue with their usual Sunday routines. Then came Sunday, July 3, 2022. Hope Bible Baptist Church of Chipata held its first Sunday morning service. Of the thirty to forty people who had attended the Bible study, only five joined us. Five people came. That first Sunday, we opened Romans chapter 1 and began laying a foundation for the Gospel, the Christian life, and what a church is meant to be. Four years later, we have just completed Romans chapter 14. As we journeyed through Romans, we watched God build His church alongside it. Not everyone who began with us is still here. Some remained faithful, others drifted away, and we experienced many of the same joys and challenges churches have faced since the New Testament. Yet the Word continued to be preached, and God continued building His church.

This month, we celebrated the church's fourth anniversary. One of the greatest joys was watching seven believers follow the Lord in baptism. Each baptism testified to God's saving grace and reminded us that faithful Gospel ministry still bears fruit. Six years later, we are still opening the Bible and watching Christ do exactly what He promised: *"I will build my church."* God took a burden and turned it into a church reaching people throughout Chipata with the Gospel.

As we prepare to begin furlough in August, we look back gratefully at what God has done and forward to what He will do next. We're excited to encourage our American brethren in the work Christ has given all of us: making Him known and reaching others with the Gospel. Thank you for praying, giving, and partnering with us in what God is doing in Chipata. To God alone be the glory!

Our 4th Anniversary Service at Hope Chipata!



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