

Trip Report
Maputo Church Center
United Congregational Church of Southern Africa – Mozambique Synod
February 2004

During my visit to Mozambique recently I visited with Reverend Arao Litsuri, Mozambique Synod Secretary for the United Congregational Church of Southern Africa. I met with ministers and active laypersons who are highly respected and very dedicated, especially to the church's mission to be "... *faithfully committed to the propagation of the gospel through preaching, teaching, healing, and empowering and the creation of a self-reliant church and a just society.*"

The Church Center in Maputo is a vehicle to expand the mission of the UCCSA in Mozambique, especially as it continues to experience severe drought and other hardships as a developing nation. This Church Center is a testament to brighter days ahead. In some ways this Church Center may be compared to the Disciples Center of the Christian Church (Disciples of Christ) located in Indianapolis, Indiana. However, this Church Center will provide many more services. It will be a place to worship, to host guests who come from the rural provinces and other nations to conduct conferences and meetings and to train pastors and lay persons in areas such as theology and English. Other portions of the building are reserved for office and residential leasing as a way to generate income for the whole building and the church.

The Church Center construction has progressed a great deal, thanks to local efforts as well as special support from the Christian Church (Disciples of Christ) in Illinois and Wisconsin, which has contributed a portion of its regional capital campaign funds to Global Ministries for this purpose. Although this project is large, it is being completed according to general building practices in Mozambique – a little at a time, as it is possible. I noticed the builder's workroom and discovered how labor-intensive building can be in Mozambique. Unlike in the United States, where builders purchase prepared wood and premixed concrete, I saw timber (large tree trunks) that clearly had to be cut, and stones to be grinded to make concrete. I am pleased to report that the roof is on, the walls are being painted, flooring is complete in some areas, some doors have been hung, and the wiring is complete. The next round of work will need to be the windows, fixtures for walls, and ceilings.

I sense great expectations from the church members and surrounding neighborhood that watch this building rise four levels high. It is not about a building, but about the ministry that can be carried out for the local community and congregations beyond Maputo. There still is much work ahead, yet it is clear that the supportive partnership, prayers and financial gifts from the Christian Church (Disciples of Christ) in Illinois and Wisconsin and others who care about Mozambique, make this future ministry a faithful ministry that brings hope to the people of Mozambique.

Prepared by Afia Griffith
Associate Director for Resource Development
Global Ministries
P.O. Box 1986
Indianapolis, IN 46206-1986
Telephone: 317-713-2555
Fax: 317-635-4323
Email: gifts@dom.disciples.org