

**ACU:** Tell us your vision for ACU and your ministry in Zambia, in general.

**Ben:** My vision is to see ACU become a centre of educational excellence which will serve Zambia, Africa and the world characterised by God-glorifying training and academic rigour. Biblically based formal educational opportunities will have far-reaching effects for the Kingdom of God. I am grateful to be a small part of this vision and intend to be faithful in the work for which God has called us. Our family is looking forward to making new friends and mutually investing in the lives of students, faculty members and our local community.

**ACU:** As you look forward to moving to Zambia, what excites you most?

**Ben:** I am excited about the potential I see for ACU in Zambia. I believe that ACU is positioned to have a direct, vital impact on the future of Zambia. This is especially true in relation to agriculture and crop production, which is projected to become a stronger economic driving force over the next years. The government is actively encouraging research and development in many aspects of agriculture. As Providence allows ACU's science department to develop, we are looking forward to many collaborations with Zambian farmers, businesses and other researchers to provide actionable services through research. God has opened many doors already and I am confident that He will continue to show Himself faithful as we walk the path He has prepared.

If you are interested in helping start the agriculture programme at ACU, please consider financially supporting Ben & Abby Kilian. Go to <http://acu-usa.com/donate/> and select their name from the drop down list.



[www.acu-zambia.com/students](http://www.acu-zambia.com/students)



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Please contact us if you believe God is calling you to serve in such areas



Sign up to receive monthly prayer update

**ACU prayer update team:** [prayer@acu-zambia.com](mailto:prayer@acu-zambia.com)  
**ACU-ZAMBIA:** [www.acu-zambia.com](http://www.acu-zambia.com)

"And let us not grow weary of doing good, for in due season we will reap, if we do not give up."

Galatians 6:9



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## The Significance of Practical Education for Development of Agriculture in Zambia

By Obed Lungu, Professor of Soil Chemistry & Fertility, University of Zambia

Agriculture is a vocation ordained by God. At creation, man was charged to work and take care of the Garden of Eden (Genesis 2:15). Man was given the cultural mandate to have dominion over creation and derive his livelihood from the land (Genesis 1:26, 28). There is a sense in which man has allowed circumstances to prevail over him, resulting in the underperformance of agriculture. Some challenges besetting Zambian agriculture are elaborated in this article. Sustainable and profitable agriculture must be premised on Biblical principles and deliberately purposed to honour the Lord Jesus Christ and glorify God (Colossians 3:17).

Agriculture is an applied and practical science. Its value is seen through its practice. Training in agriculture must include an effective combination of the science and practice of it. Science is conducted in the laboratory and on small-scale plots, often without the involvement of farmers. Practice of agriculture takes place in the field.

About two-thirds of Zambia's population live in rural areas and directly or indirectly derive their livelihood from agriculture. Growth and development of agriculture is essential to reducing poverty as well as enhancing human development. Practical agricultural education offers the best prospect to positively impact agriculture in this country.

To succeed, there is need for a complete change of the mindset of those who venture into agriculture. Students must be educated on the sanctity of manual labour and the process must start early in their careers. It is acknowledged that people who become successful farmers or agro-business persons were inspired by early exposure to agricultural practice. Successful indigenous commercial farmers in Zambia should be encouraged to participate in a Young Farmers' Club while still in school.

Contrary to the Biblical cultural mandate, the agricultural profession has not been highly regarded by the community.

At school, errant pupils are often sent to work in fields as punishment and so develop a negative attitude towards field work. Graduates do not expect to do manual labour because this is perceived to negate the purpose for attaining higher education. Agriculture is often a last choice career after those



## Matters for Prayer

- Please continue to pray for the registration process with the Higher Education Authority of Zambia. Our paperwork has been approved, and we are now waiting to receive the results from the site visit.
- Pray for the upcoming missions conference at Kabwata Baptist Church and that the people of God might give toward the work of ACU through this event.
- Please pray for continued safety of the ACU staff and families as we live and travel around Lusaka and beyond.
- Ben & Abby Kilian are excitedly looking forward to moving to Zambia to help set up the agriculture programme at ACU. Please pray that God, through His people, will provide for their financial needs to make this possible.
- Pray for the Janse van Rensburg family as they look to God to provide the needed support to move to Zambia and assist ACU with leading up the Student Labour Programme.
- Pray for the ongoing health of the ACU team and that we will be able to glorify God even in physical weaknesses.

## Matters for Praise

- Praise for the approval by the Kabwata Baptist Church elders that their 2016 Mission Conference donation will go to ACU.
- We are thankful for the many volunteers helping with projects at ACU. This university is truly an international work of God's people.
- Progress is being made in the library. There are now over 2,000 items catalogued with more being added daily.
- We are grateful that God protected our guard and property during a recent attempted break-in at the ACU Lusaka campus.

## The Significance of Practical Education(Cont.)

professions considered more prestigious (e.g., Medicine and Engineering). Even those who enroll in agriculture clamour for a degree in Agricultural Economics rather than Agronomy or Animal Science because these guarantee white collar jobs after graduation. The public perception of agriculture is also negative. Agriculture is considered a sanctuary for the retired and retrenched workers. Many people overlook the need for energetic persons in the practical agricultural professions. Recent employment trends show that formal employment for graduates in the public sector is declining. Private sector or self employment is much more demanding of practical skills than public sector jobs. Graduates with relevant practical skills are better equipped to land jobs in these markets. Training institutions must respond to this demand and produce graduates who exhibit critical thinking, innovation and entrepreneurship skills.

The ACU programme in agriculture is progressive in the Biblical sense as it lays a foundation for understanding God's perspective on all aspects of this profession. It is also beneficial in that the students will be exposed to the dignity of work through the Student Labour Programme. Only a few institutions in Sub-Saharan Africa have similar practical programmes. One institution in Botswana has responded to declining formal employment in the public sector by developing a programme on Supervised Entrepreneurship Project (SEP) designed to equip agriculture graduates with entrepreneurship skills that make them better prepared for employment in the private sector or self employment. In Uganda, one institution requires that prospective students of agriculture spend one year at a farm before enrolling into a formal agricultural programme.

Agricultural education in Zambia, as in many other developing countries, faces many challenges that adversely affect the quality of training and bring into question the relevance of the programmes offered. The weak link, or complete lack thereof, between the science and practice of agriculture is one cause of underperformance of African agriculture. University training curricula reveals a shift from practice to science. Theoretical courses dominate the curricula, leaving little room for experiential practical training. The practicals that are conducted to complement the theory are usually only laboratory-based.

In order to meaningfully contribute to agricultural development, training in agriculture must not only embrace science and technology, but it must also impart practical skills to prepare graduates who can distribute agricultural knowledge to farmers while exemplifying a Biblical perspective on this profession.



## An Interview with Ben Kilian

By Kendra Hawley, ACU Librarian

**ACU:** Tell us about where you're from, where you live and about your family.

**Ben:** I grew up in rural northeast Pennsylvania. I met my beautiful wife, Abby, during our undergraduate studies at Cedarville University. The Lord has blessed us with two fun-loving daughters, Aeslyn (4) and Ellie (2). My family and I are currently living in eastern Washington State, USA for the duration of my graduate studies.

**ACU:** Briefly tell us about your educational, work and ministry experience.

**Ben:** I am completing my graduate studies in the Molecular Plant Sciences programme at Washington State University. Most of my work has revolved around academia – research, teaching, and mentoring undergraduates. My Christian ministry is primarily focused on the spiritual leadership of my family and secondarily with active participation in our local church.

**ACU:** How did you come to a saving faith in Christ (your testimony)?

**Ben:** God graciously blessed me with a Christian heritage. I heard and intellectually understood the gospel message as a young child, yet failed to grasp its power. I was still a sinner, bound for eternal punishment. Around ten years of age the Holy Spirit began His saving work in me. This occurred while under the weekly preaching of God's Word. For the first time I truly glimpsed the holiness of God and I was petrified. I realised that I had no hope within myself. I pled with God night after night to be merciful to me and save my soul. Even though I knew I could do nothing to save myself, I made every effort to push down my sinful desires and hide my sin from everyone, but this only escalated conviction and guilt. I failed each day in mortifying the flesh, and I knew that I rightly deserved God's wrath. Gradually God brought me to the freeing realisation that I simply needed to cling to Jesus. I needed to look to the promises that God made in His Word. I needed to trust that He is who He says He is, and He has accomplished what I could not. I did not need to sense a feeling of 'blissful peace that all was well'; rather, I needed to look to Christ alone as my hope and surety (Ephesians 2:4-5). Finally, I saw the beauty of my Saviour. Dry doctrines that I had heard all my life became fountains of truth that poured into the parched soil of my soul. The truths of Scripture took on new life and meaning as the Holy Spirit began to teach me and reveal to me a fuller understanding of God and His great salvation. Pre-conversion, I did not have a heart that longed to worship God. This was one of the first things that the Holy Spirit changed in me. I found myself truly delighting in singing praises to God. Over the years, the lyrics of these songs have become imprinted in my mind and the Lord uses them to keep the great truths of the gospel ever present before me. Because of His promises, I am confident that He will continue to work in my life, making me more into the image of His Son. It is only by God's grace that one day I will be able to say with Paul, "I have fought the good fight, I have finished the course, I have kept the faith." (2 Timothy 4:7).

**ACU:** Share with us how you heard about ACU and in what role you will serve?

**Ben:** My wife and I first heard about ACU through Voddie Baucham. We heard him speak during a chapel meeting while we were students at Cedarville and then we followed his ministry online. When the Bauchams announced their move to Zambia, I learned of ACU and quickly realised how closely it aligned with the desires, goals and vision that we have for our family.

My role with ACU will involve teaching, mentoring and discipling students in addition to developing an agricultural research programme for ACU. I will be developing curricula for the department and preparing the foundation and vision for ACU's future involvement and investment in agriculture. I also hope to be involved in community farming and student labour projects.

