



Ideas to Interpret the 2009 Annual Conference Offering to complete unfinished churches in Mozambique

During the 2009 Annual Conference an offering will be taken to complete about thirty unfinished church buildings in Mozambique. We encourage churches to collect these offerings during Lent, at Easter or Pentecost, or any time leading up to the June 2009 Annual Conference and beyond.

The following possibilities stem from ideas that were submitted by churches engaged in Mozambique mission and actually used them. Give it a try!

- **Tithe your building campaign:** Many churches who are involved in a building campaign tithe their own capital campaign in order to construct a church in another place or country. It increases the commitment to their own campaign by adding the commitment to those in great need.
- **Mission Minutes:** Conduct a Mozambique Moment during your worship service to inform the congregation of your plans for a Lenten or Easter offering. This can be incorporated periodically to keep the interest fresh all the way up to Annual Conference.
- **Read devotions and letters!:** Read selected devotions that you receive online or any letters that you receive (edited if need be) from your Mozambique covenant partner in **Sunday morning worship**. You will need to put this in context with some background information about the offering and possibly your covenant partner and relationship. You never know what kind of wonderful response these messages can trigger. Visit www.moumethodist.org to find Lenten devotionals.
- **Bulletin Board:** Make a bulletin board and post the photos of unfinished church buildings (and the corresponding current worship space (often a tree) along with the story and stats. Stories and photos will be posted online.
- **Pray a lot!:** Put these church names on your church prayer list, in the bulletin for each day of the week.
- **Sell "block":** Approximate cost of a block in Mozambique is \$.57 - 1.00, depending on quality and size. Choose an amount and "build" a church from the blocks donated.
- **See "zincs":** Approximate cost of a zinc (corrugated metal sheet of roofing) is about \$20. "Cover" a church from zincs donated.
- **Blessings Challenge with Weekly One-liners:** If your church is blessed with a roof, include \$1 in your offering. If your church is blessed with window, include \$1 in your offering and so on, corresponding with our many gifts, compared to worshipping under a tree! Weekly one liners about counting blessings of your own church's building: If your church is blessed with doors, consider contributing \$1 for a church that has no doors. If your church is blessed with windows, consider contributing \$2 for a church without windows. If your church is blessed with a roof, consider contributing \$3 for a church without a roof.
- **Bucket Challenge:** One church sent us their "bucket challenge" - a special offering held during a Sunday Service to raise funds. They write, "This special offering is so much fun, as it is a collection of loose change made by boys and girls (and adults) in the congregation. Two buckets marked "Boy's" - "Girls" are hung (balanced) on the ends of a wooden pole. Then at the beginning of our Sunday Service the children are asked to come up to place their coins in the bucket of their choice. The bucket that ends up having the most coins...is the heaviest and moves closer to the floor. This has turned out to be a joyous event for everyone at Bethel. The Boy's win sometimes; the Girl's other times." You can divide your congregation or children in any kinds of groupings to do this and raise funds for the 2009 Annual Conference Offering to complete unfinished church buildings in Mozambique.

- **Jehoash Chest:** Set up a Jehoash Chest in the Sanctuary to collect funds. In the reign of Jehoash, this was done to fund the repairing of the Temple. "Jehoiada the priest took a chest, bored a hole in the lid and placed it beside the pillar, to the right of the entry to the Temple of God; in it the priests who guarded the threshold put all the money which was given for the Temple of God. Whenever they saw there was a great deal of money in the chest, the king's secretary would come, and they would empty it out and reckon the money then in the Temple of God. Once checked, they paid this money over to the masters of works attached to the Temple of God... for all the costs of the Temple repairs." **2 Kings 12: 10-13** Obtain a wooden barrel, box or chest, drill a hole in the lid, consider painting or varnishing to be presentable in the sanctuary. Explain what the box is about, and have the people come forward weekly to drop contributions to the building offering into the box.
- **Miles of pennies:** Set the goal to collect a mile (or number of miles) pennies. There are 84,480 pennies in a mile. That is \$844.80. One church set a goal of a mile of pennies and the children went about the congregation each Sunday, collecting in buckets. Another church happened to have a covenant goal of \$528.00. Since there are 5,280 feet in a mile, it was a corresponding number for their goal, hence they sought a mile of pennies. If one gave a foot they gave \$.10. If one gave 10 feet, they gave \$1.00, 100 feet = \$10, and so on. A corresponding chart or "road map" could accompany this idea as a visual.
- **Birthday Basket:** In Mozambique, as in India, when it is your birthday or anniversary you *GIVE* gifts, rather than receive them. Establish a "Birthday Basket" where, each Sunday up to Annual Conference, people can give to your Mozambique covenant in honor or memory of a birthday or anniversary. Some people give \$1 for each year of their birthday (50 years = \$50). Some give \$1 for each year and for each person celebrating an anniversary (10 years X 2 = \$20). Tell the concept of the "Birthday Basket" when you start it, write about it in your newsletter and place a paragraph about it in your Sunday bulletin. Then announce it regularly, each week, even working it into a regular part of coming forward for the Children's story. See how children will race to the basket with a dime or quarter when it is their birthday. This is also a good way to teach stewardship if you take the time to teach children about tithing. For example \$1 of the \$10 they received for their birthday. Place a bulletin announcement to let folks know it is an opportunity to make a difference. Some churches put a "Thank You" note in the basket for donors to take when they make a contribution. The note tells a little about the offering and how the contributions will be used.
- **Easter or Pentecost Offering:** Some churches designate 10% of their special Easter Offerings to a mission project. Consider designating your offering to complete unfinished church buildings in Mozambique. Experience at one church found that if promoted effectively the "tithe" of this offering increase the total offering so that the portion the church receives for their general fund is more than they would have received had it not been tied to an outreach mission of the church.
- **Give "Things":** One church gave "things" that could be used by allowing families/people to "adopt" them. Twelve-year-old children drew pictures (a picture of a concrete blocks, a door, windows, corrugated zinc sheeting for a roof, tools, etc). On each picture they wrote how much that item would cost in Mozambique (get current list from *Mozambique Initiative*). Then they hung the pictures down the side wall of the sanctuary. The children passed out little Post-It style sticky notes at the end of the Children's Sermon. Then the congregation members were asked to write their name on a sticky note and stick it on to the picture of the item they chose to sponsor. They raised way over \$1000.
- **Soda for Mozambique:** One women's circle sells soda for Mozambique. A small church without a soda machine has several folks who donate cases of soda. Then the women sell it during fellowship hour and dinners for \$1 per can. Someone also donated a small refrigerator just for that soda. In 3 months (in this small congregation) they made almost \$200. They put a sign on the fridge door that tells the purpose. (Lewis Chapel UMC)
- **Altar Candle:** Place a candle on the altar in your sanctuary to remind everyone of the Lenten or Easter Offering and pray for the churches we are helping weekly.
- **Lenten Series:** *The Mozambique Initiative* provides a Mozambique Study Guide, complete with syllabus for a 2-3 part series. The guide begins with theological background, "Why Mission?" and continues with a

map and facts about Mozambique, some history of the country and history of the United Methodist Church in Mozambique. If any of the information provided is especially interesting you can seek further details through *The Mozambique Initiative*. A class leader can easily facilitate.

- **Sunday Morning Worship and Pastoral Prayer:** Ask your pastor to remember the purpose of this offering and say the name of one of the churches needing help during the pastoral prayer on Sunday morning.
- **Hold a Mozambique Dinner:** One church held a Mozambican dinner. They brought in a lot of greenery and bright cloths for tables. They tried to make it as intimate a setting as possible. Then they went to a web site to get recipes from Mozambique. They served a spicy lentil/vegetable stew, shrimp with a very hot dipping sauce, fresh fruits, chicken potpie and salad and a "very interesting" strawberry dessert. Several people prepared dishes (and donated ingredients) then asked people to give a free will offering of at least as much as they would pay to attend a church dinner. Many put in more. Part of the centerpieces on the tables was bottled to which they pasted pictures of Mozambicans and during the evening. Guests could take these home as a souvenir of the evening. During the evening talk about the need to complete these church buildings in Mozambique.
- **Envelopes and Needs:** One church took 3 x 5 envelopes and printed the name of the project and the specific need on it (roofing, windows, blocks). Amounts requested from the church varied from \$1 to \$30. They put them in a basket in the narthex and asked people to consider taking one as a sacrificial Lenten gift. Many people took 3 or 4. The cost of a building project can be divided up in all sorts of ways and people would be willing to take envelopes for Lenten and Easter giving.
- **Fund on a Calendar:** One church divided the amount they wanted to raise by the days in the time period (\$2,000 for 40 days of Lent = \$50/day; \$500 = \$12.50; \$100 = \$2.50/day). For \$2.50 people could sponsor a day of the support. People were encouraged to sponsor birthdays, anniversaries, etc. during the period - and then told, "There is no limit to the number of days you sponsor". That way several people could cover whole weeks. People could write their name on the dates on the giant calendar, which could hang just outside the sanctuary. Another way could be to take the date and put it in a collection box, having someone update the calendar with dates that were committed, leaving the open dates.
- **Give for your Blessings:** One church borrowed ideas from Heifer Project and others - by listing blessings that were associated with water or other conveniences that we take for granted. They attached an amount that each family should donate for that particular blessing. Ex: donate 25 cents for every toothbrush in your home; donate \$1.00 for every faucet in your home; donate 10 cents for every shower taken in your house this week \$10 for each major electrical appliance (only 5% of the homes in Mozambique even have electricity). The list of conveniences could be endless in this country! These things were printed in a list on a sheet of paper & passed out. Then a deadline was set by which that were to be turned back in. (Nevada UMC)
- **Sharing Table:** Set up an attended table where people can set things for "sale". Give all proceeds to your 2009 Annual Conference Offering for Mozambique. Items for sale could include things that people have brought from Africa, good items that people no longer need. Price them out and collect the donations.

The Mozambique Initiative is grateful to all who gave of themselves to share their ministry ideas with others. These contributors know that their own congregations have been transformed by engaging in their mission with Mozambique. For more details or if you have an idea to share, please send it to:

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