Some of our staff do extension work in the villages. They visit farmers who have come for residential training and do on-farm trainings. We are continuing in offering a weekly radio program on a community radio station. Twice a month we air on Radio Christian Voice. These programs are well received and people seem to listen to "Kasisi On Air". Since November the extension workers have been setting up demonstration plots in the district. We work very closely with the Ministry of Agriculture and Livestock in the district. We have offered them some training in organic agriculture as well.

There is some research is being assisted by the School of Agriculture at the University of Zambia and two universities in Norway. We are also starting a new partnering with a British university again looking at soils including the biological life of the soil.

Financing is always a huge problem. KATC has a lean staff for all the work going on. There are 25 senior staff and a support staff of 50. We are looking at more mechanization and reducing the labour. We have identified a new Claas combine coming out of India which is pegged at Euro28,000 which is a fraction of the cost of a North American combine. This would help us reduce on hand labour in harvesting and threshing all of our crops. We would also like to invest in a tea brewer which would allow us to make fertilizing teas and apply to our crops via the irrigation systems. This system would cost about $22,000. With the tea brewer we would actually be making our own fertilizers. This would greatly reduce the cost of fertilization and enhance plant growth.

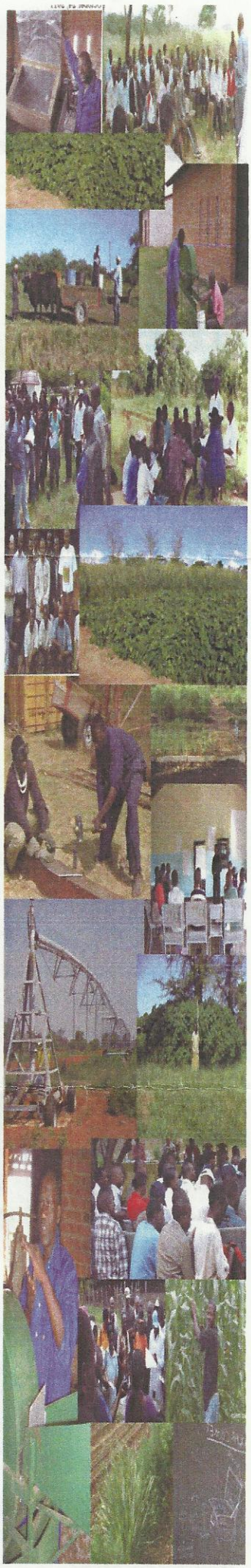
We have applied at three institutions for longer term funding (3-5 years). We hope to know more about these grant applications by April 2012.

At the moment we are busy in preparing a new 5-year Strategic Plan. The last plan we had expired in August. One donor is willing to help us if we can present this Strategic Plan.

One of our staff attended the Climate Change Conference in Durban recently. KATC is also involved in the preparations for the 2nd African Conference on Organic Agriculture which will be held in Lusaka in May. Participants will be coming from across the continent and a few from Europe. They might be visiting KATC during the conference. It is just amazing how 20 years ago there were only 5 or 6 of us interested in organic agriculture and we were all expatriates. Now there are many very knowledgeable people and all of them are Zambians. I'm kind of looked upon as the grandfather of the movement. Not that I'm old! But it is nice to see so many young knowledgeable people in sustainable organic agriculture. I saw recently that the University of Guelph has launched a transformative new Chair in Sustainable Food Production. Professor Ralph Martin is heading this chair and is well recognized in the Canadian organic movement. So we seem to be all heading in the right direction.

We do a lot at KATC. This is possible because of the dedication of the staff and their knowledge of sustainable organic agriculture. My deputy Dr. Henrietta Kalinda is a most wonderful person to work with. She is very competent so we complement each other. I often say I'm the brawn of the organization and she is the brains.

We thank you very kindly for your generosity and prayers. We ask for your continued support.

Paul Desmarais

Paul Desmarais S.J.
Executive Director
Kasisi Agricultural Training Centre
Lusaka, ZAMBIA