

Zambia Newsletter

Zambia Missions

1910 Sycamore View Rd
Bartlett, TN 38134
(901) 574-9552

Web: www.zambiamissions.org

David & Lorie French

P.O. Box 350070
Lusaka, Zambia (Africa)
zambiamissions@gmail.com

February 2020



Life has become very difficult in Zambia this past year. Food prices have increased significantly due to the drought and this, in turn, has led to a shortage of electric power for the country. The economy has suffered, and malnutrition has increased (cf. more below). We also suffered through the death of a student wife and newborn baby. However, on the positive side of things, we hired four new teachers and welcomed 14 new students to campus for the start of the new school year at Daybreak Bible College (DBC)

Report: Bible College.

As you may remember, we lost (death) one of our Bible teachers last October. And, unfortunately, one of our other teachers had to resign and return home due to family responsibilities. I also decided to terminate the Student Supervisor for poor job performance.

After vetting several possible teachers, I interviewed five candidates in early January and hired four of them as Bible Teachers (pictured below is our teaching staff for 2020). One of the new teachers (Sianyama) has just recently graduated with a Bible degree from African Christian College (Swaziland). One of the men (65-year-old) was highly recommended to me by the above-mentioned teacher who had to resign for family



reasons and the other two men were highly recommended by our Zambian board members as they have had extensive experience in ministry (both men are older men, aged 45 and 55). This now gives us a teaching staff of six Bible teachers (three young men with degrees in Bible and 3 older men with extensive ministry experience). In addition, we have the wife of Boniface (who died in October) who is continuing as a Women's Teacher (and doing a fantastic job) and we have our Agriculture Teacher (Francis).

We enrolled 14 new students in January (Freshmen), and we began the new school year on Jan 6. I began the new school year with a class on "The Mission of God" (which I taught to all three classes of students). See the two student profiles at the end of this newsletter.

Agricultural Ministry.

We decided this year to devote more attention to getting the new students started with their vegetable gardens. This is more urgent since our students can no longer earn any money from raising chickens at DBC. We are still teaching our students how to raise chickens as they can still make money in the rural areas away from Lusaka (where the market is flooded with chickens) when they return home. We also are going to start teaching our students to raise/sell pigs. We have established a partnership with a nearby farm which will provide the practical training.

Death of a Student Wife and Newborn.

The wife of one of our students gave birth to a pre-mature baby in mid-January. This is quite common in Zambia due to malnutrition and the lack of (good) prenatal care in Zambia. Unfortunately, the baby was taken to UTH (main hospital in Zambia) and soon died. If you will remember, this is the hospital that basically killed our Bible teacher in October (he contracted sepsis during a biopsy). The student's wife also became ill after the birth, and she was also taken to UTH (against our better judgment). And, as I feared, she also died.

We conducted the funeral at Daybreak on Jan 16, after which our students loaded up the casket on the back of our truck and drove out to the cemetery where our students dug the hole and buried the student's wife (see below). This was a great loss to our students (especially among the wives) as our student body is not



not very large and relationships are quite close. I have also posted additional pictures of the funeral on our Facebook page (www.facebook.com/zambiamissions).

Drought, Famine, and Hardship.

Life has become quite difficult in Zambia this past year. The rainy season last year was woefully inadequate. Most of the crops in Zambia failed and food prices have skyrocketed. The price of mealie-meal (staple food made from corn) has more than doubled! The drought also reduced the water level in Lake Kariba (and other rivers) which led to a shortage of electric power. The country was forced to impose "power sharing" which (for us) means we have no electricity for 10-12 hours per day (and it is worse in the rural areas of the country). This has seriously hurt the Zambian economy.

One evening last week, I was sitting watching a little child (4-5 years old) in Zambia who came to our house. Lorie gave her something to eat and I watched that little child eat what Lorie had given her and I realized just how important food was to that little child. It was life-giving food and there was just something about the way that child was eating that made me realize just how important small amounts of food are to the life and health of the children of Zambia. This is why every day we offer a free nutritional meal to the children in our Primary School. [If you would like to contribute to our famine relief program or for the school lunches, you can mail a donation to the above address].

We are hoping that the rainy season (which began in Dec) will bring an end to the drought, but so far it doesn't look promising (as the rains have been inconsistent and spotty). It doesn't look like the volume of rain is going to replenish the country's water supplies and solve the problem of electricity in the country. It is actually a long-term problem as Zambia has failed to keep up with the growth of the country and the country's generators and electrical grids are getting old and breaking down frequently.

It is for this reason that we have decided to begin switching over to solar power at Daybreak. This decision is not only due to the lack of power on our campus but also to the fact that the cost of electricity has tripled over the past year. It is costing us too much money for a decreasing amount of electricity. Although this will cost us a great deal over the next 2-3 years (as we switch over), it will save us a great deal of money in the long-term.

Finances.

It is difficult for me to understand why the govt. (considering the bad economy) has passed several new labor laws that have dramatically increased the cost of business. A year ago, the govt. passed a law requiring businesses to pay employees a gratuity (extra month salary per year). This year the govt. increased this amount to 25% (i.e., 3 extra months of salary per year). In addition to all the leave days and holidays already mandated (which total 7 weeks), workers have been given additional leave days for maternity, paternity, sick days, and other such days. The total of paid leave days and holidays now totals 3 months! This means that businesses must pay 15 months' salary for 9 months of work! There are also similar new laws regarding paying temporary workers.

As you can imagine, this (along with the dramatic increase for electricity and food) has significantly increased our operational costs at Daybreak. Most businesses in Zambia will ignore many (most) of these labor laws and, if caught, will just bribe government officials to avoid these extra costs. This puts us in a very difficult position because we don't pay bribes; hence we have to pay these extra costs that most businesses in Zambia will just end up ignoring.

Other Matters.

Due to the drought/famine/economy, very few of our Primary School students have been able to pay our school fees (\$7.00 per month). Rather than dismissing these students, we have decided to allow these students to continue in our school and we are continuing to feed them the daily school lunch (which is probably the only good meal these students are now getting each day).

Construction: Having hired extra Bible teachers for this year, we have had to start construction on two more teacher houses. We just completed the single men's dorm. Also, as mentioned above, we are going to start switching to solar.

Meet Our Students.



Shemu Simbaya is 37 years old. He is from the village of Kampumbu in the province of Muchinga (which is a remote northern province of Zambia). Shemu has been married (Ruth Munkodia) for the past 13 years, and he has

two children (age 3 and 8). Shemu completed the 9th grade. His primary occupation is farming (although he also earns money as a tailor). He owns his own land and plans to return to his home village upon graduating with hopes of expanding his farm and the church farm. Finding water, however, is a major challenge as they have to fetch water using a bicycle. Upon graduation he wants to be a Minister of the Word and minister to widows and orphans.



Joel Mumba is 30 years old. He is from the village of Mungwi in the province of Muchinga (same as Shemu above) Joel has been married for 2 years (Mumba Elizabeth Katongo) and he has one child (five months old). He completed the 12th grade. He has worked

as a driver but has also worked as a farmer, miller, and cleaner. He owns his own land and plans on returning home to farm and serve as a full-time, self-supporting minister.