

Zambia Newsletter

October 2004

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Dear Friends,

The time has finally arrived. Most likely, by the time you get this Newsletter, our family will already have departed the USA for Zambia. Our departure date is October 29 th. Yet, as I write this Newsletter, there is so much that remains to be done.

As you can probably imagine, we are now operating in hyper-drive. Trying to get everything together that we will need has been tough. Then, trying to determine what things we should ship, carry in our luggage, or leave behind has been quite challenging. Presently, our apartment is empty of all furniture except our beds. Laying throughout the apartment are different piles of items, assorted as to which category they belong (storage, shipment, luggage). Our suitcases are now laying throughout the apartment, filled with all our clothes and items that we must have in Zambia when we first arrive.

Tomorrow, we will begin packing our shipment of goods that will be shipped to Zambia some time next week. Once that has been taken away, we will then finish moving everything else out of our apartment into storage except for our suitcases – all in final preparations for our departure on Oct 29 th.

Our Toyota (which we bought from Japan) has now arrived in Zambia and has been cleared through customs. It will be ready for us the day we arrive.

We have decided that we will stay with our Zambian friend, Patrick Kawinga, for the first 2-3 months. Because rent is so expensive, we have decided it best to build our own house on the school property at Mapepi. Rent in Lusaka is about \$1500 for a 3 b-bedroom house. This is abnormal for Africa, but it is a situation that has been caused by the large numbers of International organizations that have based their operations in Lusaka in recent years because Zambia is one of the few stable countries in Central and Southern Africa. The U.N. and all the AIDS prevention groups have based their head-quarters in Lusaka. This has caused rent prices to increase dramatically. There is an insufficient supply of 2 and 3

Lusaka. This has caused rent prices to increase dramatically. There is an insufficient supply of 2 and 3 bedroom houses, thus, making the price for housing to increase.

Despite the abnormal rent prices, one can still build a simple block house in Zambia for \$40, 000 (which is equal to three years rent). Although the material is expensive, the labor is “dirt-cheap.” It seems foolish, therefore, for us not to build. An even greater incentive is the fact that Patrick Kawinga operates a construction business in Zambia. Our fellow missionaries down at Namwianga have used Patrick to build all of their buildings over the past ten years and he has proven himself to be an excellent builder.

Thus, we decided several months ago that we would build our own house at Mapepi (a small house with 1400 square feet). Once this has been built and paid for, it will free up a large amount of our monthly support for the work itself (instead of paying for rent). And, one day when Lorie and I leave Zambia, we will turn over this house to the school which will benefit the school for many years to come.

Doing this has also been made possible by a rather large, anonymous contribution that has been made specifically for this construction. We will need to borrow some money to complete the project, but we should be able to pay this off within the next year just from the rent money that we would have had to pay for rent anyway.

Consequently, we have instructed Patrick to begin the construction project. Already he has cleared the ground and is installing the plumbing (water and sewer) and electrical systems. The day after we arrive, Lorie and I will go out to the site and pick the actual footprint for the house. Patrick will, then, begin building the house.

We are also building a Guest House next to our own house. Because we will be needing to provide a place to stay for visiting teachers from the USA (one for each of the six, three-week terms), we felt it best to build a separate room for visiting teachers. Instead of building extra room on our house for visitors, we decided it best to give guests their own place in which to stay. This Guest House will have two small bedrooms, a bathroom, and a very small area for a kitchenette (only 250 square feet).

The plan is for Patrick to build the Guest House first (since it is smaller and quicker to build) so that we can move into the Guest House as soon as possible. By staying with Patrick and then moving into the Guest House, we will save having to rent a house in Lusaka. The money saved can be applied to the construction project. I just can't bear to pay one month's rent at such prices, if I don't have to. We hope the project will be completed in four months, but the rainy season has just begun in Zambia and this will be a major obstacle in our effort.

Although it is still difficult to determine exactly, we do believe we have raised enough monthly support for our work in Zambia. However, it is now clear that we did not raise enough funds for our “Initial Setup Fund.” I under-estimated the costs for several things (e.g. cost of customs on the Toyota car, shipment charges, cost of vaccinations, the need to buy a year's worth of office supplies to ship over, etc). As a result, I now estimate that we are about 8-10 thousand dollars short of what we need. This means that we will probably need to delay buying our primary work vehicle (4-wheel drive) until next year. I don't believe this will effect our work any since it will not be until next year's rainy season that I will have a serious need for the four-wheel drive vehicle.

As I reflect back on the past few months, I am reminded of many wonderful people that we have met in our travels and who have sacrificed to make this whole effort possible. I could tell you story after story about some of God's finest people who have responded with deep love and concern for the people of Africa and our effort to teach them better the Word of God. I could tell you about some incredible people we have met and who have assisted us in so many ways. Some have help us set up appointments to visit congregations about the work. Others have given us a place to stay or taken us out to eat after church. And, still others have contributed financially and/or donated resources and time to our work.

I hate to single out anyone in particular since there have been so many who have helped us. Nevertheless, I just have to mention a few people who have given major assistance. First, there are

several who have really helped me in setting up appointments with several churches. These would include my Dad (Parker French), Charles Cates (Paris, TN), Richard Waggoner (Fayetteville, TN), Joe Synder (Ohio), Tim Henson (Springfield, TN), and others that I believe would rather remain anonymous.

I must also mention those who have made significant financial contributions. However, most of these have asked to remain anonymous. I could tell you about a young man in Ohio who gave a large percentage of his insurance settlement from an injury. I could tell you about a preacher and his wife in Middle-Tennessee who gave a large percentage of an inheritance that they had received. And, I could tell you of many others whose sacrificial giving has reminded me of the widow's mite. In fact, I have come to realize that it is those with the least who often give the most. It is the small churches that have responded with the greatest of interest. There have been exceptions to this observation, but this does appear to be a principle that even the Bible acknowledges. But, I think God is glorified in this.

I also would like to thank several from our sponsoring congregation in Memphis who have made significant contributions to our work: (a) Kim Chapman and Ben French (overseeing the publication of the Newsletter), (b) Kathy McCoy (secretary who handles the finances), (c) Mick Wright (manages our web-page), (d) Kids Helping Kids (2-3rd graders at Sycamore View who collected several boxes of medical supplies and Sun School literature for children in Zambia), (e) Alex Brandon (who donated a refurbished Panasonic copier and supplies), (f) Young-Marrieds class and Women's ministry who have taken on Zambia as "their group project," and there are many others.

Finally, many of you have written letters of encouragement to Lorie and I – letters that have deeply moved us and encouraged us as we realize that there are brothers and sisters in Christ who truly have a heart for God's work. Lorie and I treasure these letters and we hope that you will continue to write or email us as we now move to Zambia (note our address and email at the top of page one).

Please keep us in your prayers as we now make the move to Zambia and endeavor to adjust to a new way of living in Africa. Lord willing we will write the next Newsletter from Zambia! – David

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