

ZAMBIA MISSIONS

E-Bulletin (June 2, 2009)

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Medical Mission 2009

Today is the first day of our 2009 Mapepe Medical Mission. For the next seven days, our team of 29 Americans, 23 Zambian Healthcare workers, and our 28 Mapepe Bible School staff (and a few students) will be going out each day to minister to about 1000 people each day in six different villages. Our Mapepe students are also involved as they have been previously transported to four of the six villages where they will be conducting evangelistic Bible studies for these two weeks (in hopes of starting some churches).

This year we are dramatically increasing the spiritual component of our medical mission. Thomas Simubali has organized a spiritual team of about 8 men and women who will be meeting with every person who comes through our clinic in the next seven days. Before anyone sees a nurse, doctor, optometrist, or dentist, they will first pass through our spiritual care center. We will pray with every person before they visit the healthcare centers and they will be invited to return after visiting the doctor/optometrist/dentist to further discuss their spiritual life.

We are basically trying to do (replace) what the African witchdoctor does: addressing the spiritual cause of people's sicknesses and misfortunes. Typically, Africans will go to the medical clinic (western doctor) to get medicine to treat the physical symptoms of their illness; then they will go to the traditional witchdoctor to address the cause of their problem (spiritual cause). In holistic missions, we are attempting to address both of these concerns: both the physical and the spiritual. We don't want people turning to traditional medicines and witchcraft for healing as we believe it is to God that all men should turn for all matters pertaining to life and health. Please keep us in your prayers over the next seven days as we endeavor to minister holistically to people in some



PRAYER REQUESTS

Pray for Thomas Simubali and his two children as they mourn the passing of Christine.

Pray that God will bless our efforts to train and develop our staff as we endeavor to increase the quality of our training program.

Pray for our new Zambian President as his leadership is critical to the future of Zambia.

Pray for the people of Zambia who are truly suffering during this period of global recession. Prices for basic food items have sky-rocketed and thousands have lost their jobs in the copper mines as the cost of copper has plummeted in recent weeks.

Pray that God will bless us in our efforts to advance the kingdom of God in Central Africa.

Pray that God will protect us from the forces of evil that are constantly seeking a way to discourage and destroy this work.

Pray that God will provide what financial resources we need to accomplish our work this year in Zambia.

VERY remote areas of Zambia.

Adventures in African Missions

What is it like to do mission work in Africa? Well, let me share with you the experiences of just the last few days as we endeavored to transport all our equipment and medical personnel to our base camp in the Central Province over the past few days (about 300 miles north of our Mapepe campus).

Preparations: For the past two months I have been working to make sure all our equipment and "old" vehicles were ready to go. My primary 4x4 vehicle (we call the GX) blew the engine about two months ago. I hired two mechanics to do an overhaul and get it in working order in time for this medical mission. We also bought a 6-ton truck three months ago to replace Jezebel (my 2-ton truck) which has always broken down on our previous medical mission trips. In addition to this, I have been working with our construction crew to improve and increase our visitor accommodations (install some extra showers, build 2 more visitor huts).

Advance Team Arrives. One week in advance, Joe Godley (American team leader from our sponsoring church in Memphis) and his advance team arrived which included Mark & Stephanie Taylor, their two college-aged sons, Glenda and Charlotte Bradsher. For the next week they worked with me to make the final preparations (buy medicines, food, sort the medicines, visit all the necessary govt offices, etc). Ty and Judy Jones arrived three days before the medical mission in order to get the optical clinic ready. Bobby & Bonnie Grisby (both optometrists from Jericho, NC) arrived two days in advance.

Transport Mapepe Students. On Friday (May 29) we loaded up our Mapepe bus and Jezebel (2 ton truck) with all our students and their supplies and drove them to four of the six villages that we will buy. Of course, I worried about Jezebel making it, but she did (I overhauled the engine for the 3rd time two months ago). However, the bus blew a front tire on the return trip on Saturday (this was the first domino to fall). My mechanic (who was also one of the drivers) had to go out late Saturday night to try and buy two new tires -- not easy to do in Zambia on a weekend.

Main Team Arrives (May 31). Early Sunday morning my mechanic got to work at sunrise trying to fix up the two new tires he bought and put them on the bus. At 7:30 am we finished loading up the 6-ton truck (we now call Goliath) with all our supplies, equipment, medicine, and luggage. At 8:00 am we assembled for worship and at 9:00 am we loaded up the

bus and Goliath with the advance team and headed out to the airport to pick up the main team which was scheduled to arrive at 10:10 am (16 American health-care workers). They arrived with all but one of their bags -- which was the best record yet. We loaded up all the remaining luggage on Goliath and off went the 29 Americans (minus 3 nurses who had to stay behind with me for govt interviews on Monday morning).

The Adventure Begins. No sooner did the bus head out of the airport than the front-left tire began to go down. The driver phoned the mechanic (driving on ahead in Goliath) that he thought it was just their air pressure value needing tightening. I became aware of the problem as I drove up behind Goliath now stopped on the side of the road (which in itself gave me a heart-attack). I got the little tool to tighten the air pressure value, turned around (driving my just overhauled GX landcruiser) and head back to find the bus (now off to the side of the road with a fully flat tire). We quickly changed the tire and headed off down the road to find a tire shop (not easy to find on a Sunday).

Upon finding a tire shop, we stopped to fix the flat tire. They put a new air pressure value in the tire and I again changed the tire (the tire shop didn't have a jack so I again had to use our two hydraulic jacks -- and it takes two to change it). As I put the new tire back on I, then, realized why the tire had gone flat. The tube inside the tire was the wrong tube (as the valve stem was hitting the brake-pad as the wheel turned). NO, the tire shop did not have a new tube I could buy. It was, then, suggested that we take the tube out of the spare tire and put it in the new tire (as the spare tire is going bald). Ok, "let's do it!" But, in pulling the tube out of the spare tire, the man broke the tire stem on the spare tire! Now, I don't even have a spare tire to put back on the bus to get it to another tire shop! As the tire shops workers began to discuss our solution, I called Moonga (a driver who was busy picking up a rental bus) and asked him to bring the rented bus to where we were so that we could send the American team on (which would give us the rest of the day to resolve our tire problems).

The head man of the tire shop came up with a new idea. He put an extra nut on the tire stem which would pull the tire stem up closer to the tire rim (allowing it to clear the brake-pads). And, sure enough, it worked! But, I don't know if I trust this. Afterall, this "solution" meant that a nut was inside the tire that ought not to be there between the tire rim and the tube itself!

Moonga arrived with the other bus. So, we had all the Americans get off the MBC bus and on to the rented bus. But, then, Moonga told me that the oil light was going on and off on this rented bus (which had just had an engine overhaul).

Not good. So, now what? Only one solution left. Get everyone back off the rented bus and back on to the MBC bus... and let it go with the "fix" tire (and no spare) and hope for the best! So, we did and off went the MBC bus with no spare and a "not-so-sure" fixed tire. I instructed the driver that if he had a flat, he would have to borrow one of the tires off the back in order to go on (or get to the nearest point of civilization). So, off they went.... as I "held my breath"

More Problems. As I drove home with the remaining three American nurses, I began to realize that my newly overhauled GX Landcruiser was not running right. It had no power. "Now, what?" It didn't appear to be an engine problem, but a fuel starvation problem. But, it didn't matter what the problem was, it is too late now to fix the problem. So, scratch one vehicle from service.

American Team Arrives. Later Sunday evening I got the call I had been waiting for all afternoon: the MBC bus with the Americans had arrived (along with Goliath which had no problems whatsoever)! Great news. Moonga and I, then, began to make plans as to how we were going to get everyone else up to base camp on the next day (Monday). With one vehicle down, new plans had to be made. Still needing to be transported were the 23 Zambian healthcare workers and the 18 MBC staff and some remaining students. Remaining was the rented bus (the oil pressure light was just a loose connection), Samson (one of our other 4x4 Land- cruisers), and my Toyota Camry. Not enough seats.

Monday (New Day, New Adventure). First tasks: we have three American nurses that need to get to their government interviews at 9:00 am; and we have a student from Malawi who must go to Immigration to get his visa renewed (which Immigration wouldn't do last Friday). So, I took the three nurses to their interview (dropped them) while Thomas Simubali took the Malawian student to Immigration. We, then, loaded up the trailer behind Samson with everyone's luggage; then we loaded everyone on the rented bus and into Samson and off they went to a rendezvous point in Lusaka (where they were to pick up other healthcare workers and the 3 nurses).

Meanwhile, I sent a driver to the airport to pick up the one lost bag that didn't make it the day before. I also had the two mechanics working on my GX to return to see if they could fix whatever was wrong with it. Yes, the lost bag had arrived; but when my driver got to the airport the airline people had all gone off on their two-hour lunch break. They would not return until after 2:00 pm which meant that someone would have to remain behind. Around noon we finally were able to send off the rented bus and Samson. We had also managed to

come up with another solution to make up for the loss of the GX. Kennedy Mukuka decided that he could take his vehicle, pick up the three nurses, and wait for the luggage coming from the airport. It was a good thing that he did, because around noon I was informed that the nurses had not yet been able to have their interview. The government office had lost their files and had taken 3 hours to find them again (at least, they found them)! Eventually, the nurses completed their interviews and the luggage from the airport arrived around 3:00 pm. And, off they went while Lorie and I remained behind here at Mapepe "holding our breath again" and praying that everyone makes it okay. Late Monday afternoon (around sunset) I began to get calls from the drivers as they reached base camp safely. The last vehicle (with the 3 nurses) arrived about 8:30 pm.

And, then there was one. It's Tuesday morning (first day of the medical clinic) and Lorie and I are still stuck here at Mapepe. We had planned to travel north in our car once everyone was safely on their way; but, the mechanics who were asked to checkout my GX (but told to return no later than 12 noon) never returned -- not until about 7:00 pm last night. And, neither were they able to solve the problem (although they now think the problem has to do with clogged filters in the gas tanks).

In any case, Lorie and I (along with our daughter Kerin and another Zambian) will be heading out of here for base camp within the next 30 minutes. But, I thought before heading off I would write you all this email just so you can be praying for a safe and successful medical mission. Obviously, Satan is working against us; but it doesn't matter what the kingdom of darkness throws at us, for we know that "all things are possible through Christ Jesus our Lord" (Phil 4:13).

Upon our return I'll send out a ebulletin to let you know how the rest of our "adventure" goes.

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