

# Zambia Newsletter

## Zambia Missions

1910 Sycamore View Rd  
Memphis, TN 38134  
(901) 372-1874

## David & Lorie French

P.O. Box 36893  
Lusaka, Zambia (Africa)  
dfrench@zambiamissions.org



Web: [www.zambiamissions.org](http://www.zambiamissions.org)

February 2008

Both Lorie and I (and Natasha) have returned to Zambia and have launched into a new school year that had begun even before we got back. Classes began on January 7<sup>th</sup> with 35 male students and 13 female students. We found everyone here in good health and in good spirits. There were, however, a lot of repairs to the vehicles to be made in time for the first mission campaign of the year (all students are still away on campaigns as I write this newsletter).

Our farming operations have progressed very well so that we now have most all of the new areas for drip agriculture planted with vegetables (e.g. cabbage, green beans, onions, egg-plants, tomatoes, etc). The rest of the farm is planted with maize. Of course, the rainy season is in full force right now and, thus, there is no need for the drip-irrigation until April/May. However, the rains have been so heavy that much of the maize is rotting in the fields. Richard Myers will be coming three times this year to conduct 6 weeks of our Agricultural Workshops and giving us guidance on our farming operations/development. The first of these workshops will be held the first two weeks of March.

Other special upcoming activities worthy of mention are: (a) Missionary Retreat at the end of March (we are inviting missionaries from countries in Central and Southern Africa to come here to Mapepe), (b) Seminar in April (we are conducting a one-month workshop for High School teachers from across the country during their school holidays), and (c) Medical Mission which will be conducted during the first two weeks of June.

After much debate, we finally decided to go ahead and ship a container although the increase cost of fuel made this more expensive than we had anticipated. But, we had more than a whole container of donated items ready to ship that we needed to get to Zambia (e.g. books, Bibles, Sunday school materials, medical supplies & equipment for the medical mission, tables and chairs for the school classrooms, donated refurbished copier, clothing, etc). We felt the need for these materials was great enough to press on with the shipment, but it has pretty much drained all our financial resources and then some. Decisions like this are difficult, especially when we are still facing some remaining construction needs. We just have to make the best decisions we can and trust in God to provide.

**Lesson from Kenya.** As many of you are no doubt aware, Kenya has fallen into chaos over the past month since the disputed election last month. It was a close election and there were numerous election irregularities observed by both domestic and international observers – enough to support the claims of the opposition party (lead by a leader from the Luo tribe) that the election was stolen by the ruling party (lead by a leader from the Kikuyu tribe). This has now pitted the two largest tribes of Kenya against each other and it has led to widespread violence across the country as members of each tribe have gone through neighborhoods rooting out (and attacking) members from the other tribes (i.e., a form of ethnic cleansing of communities). Thousands of people have been injured and killed and perhaps a million people displaced from their homes (refugees).

Although Kenya is a long way from us here in Zambia (and has not produced any problems here), what has happened in Kenya has deeply troubled all Africans. “If it can happen in Kenya, it can happen anywhere!” This is what Africans are now saying. Kenya has long been regarded as one of the most stable and prosperous countries in all of Africa. It was hoped that what happened in Rwanda in 1994 (when Hutu killed more than one million Tutsis) was just a tragic, one-time event in Africa’s progress toward nation-building and democracy. But, events like that now unfolding in Kenya raise serious questions about just how far Africa has progressed in defeating tribalism. It is one thing to see tribal conflicts in countries where nationhood has never really taken hold, but it is another thing to see it erupt again in a country like Kenya – a country long considered stable and progressive. Hence, “if it can happen in Kenya, it can happen anywhere in Africa!”

This is one more reason why I believe that true Christian faith is so badly needed in Africa, for it is the message of Christ and the cross that supersedes ethnic loyalties and transforms former enemies into brothers in the family of God. In Christ, we “no longer regard others from a worldly point of view” and become ministers of reconciliation (2 Cor 5:16-20). It is the message and example of Christ that teaches us to love our enemies and to do well to those who do us wrong (Matt 5-6). In fact, it is Christ who teaches us to die for those who hate us and to seek the best interest of others (Phil 2:4-11). It is a message that dates all the way back even to Old Testament as Israel was taught to extend mercy and hospitality to Gentiles. And, in sharp contrast to the ancient thinking of men, Genesis boldly declared that all men are brothers of one father (Gen 10).

Tribalism remains one of the most serious threats to the future stability and development of Africa. Although not often identified, it most always lies at the heart of Africa's problems. In fact, I am convinced that (along with jealousy) tribalism is the most important enemy to be defeated in Africa. More foreign aid and greater humanitarian efforts will NOT defeat this enemy, for it is a spiritual disease that secular solutions will not cure. It is only Christ and the message of the cross that will defeat this great enemy as people are taught no longer to judge (hate) men on the basis of their ethnicity, but to love all men as God loves them and died for all men upon the cross! Only when men learn to envision the eternal kingdom of God can temporary matters of this life (i.e., tribal origins) become unimportant in the face of eternity.

Missional Lesson from Kenya. There is, however, one further lesson to be learned from Kenya. Christianity has been quite prominent in Kenya for more than a century. In fact, there is probably no other country in Africa that has had more Christian missionaries (including denominational

missionaries). The percentage of Kenyans who claim to be Christian and attend church is probably higher in Kenya than in most any other African nation! (by the way, Lorie and I even served as missionaries in Kenya in 1980's).

So, in view of this, how could tribalism erupt as quickly as it has in Kenya this past month? This is a very troubling question to me. Several possibilities come to mind. Perhaps it shows just how deeply embedded are the seeds of this great evil. Perhaps it shows that Christian formation requires a great deal of time (passing of generations). Perhaps it demonstrates that tribalism (hatred of those different from ourselves) is something that lives on within all of us (not just Africans). But, of special interest to me personally, is the fact that what has happened in Kenya indicates that we Christian missionaries/preachers haven't paid enough attention to efforts to preach God's word (that which specifically confronts this problem). This is a lesson I now hear and intend to apply in our efforts to train future missionaries and preachers here at Mapepe. It is the message of Christ and the Cross we need to proclaim.

## Lorie's Reflections

Greetings! How I rejoice to be sharing with you stories from Zambia again.

Natasha and I arrived in Zambia in the midst of a 2-week local and then nationwide power outage. This year's rainy season has been intense. Places in the roof that usually don't leak are leaking. The mosquitoes and a lot of God's little "field" creatures had taken refuge in the house. The little "field" creatures had made warm beds for their children out of our mosquito nets! The only mosquito repellent in the house, were small rectangles (which were supposed to be heated in an electric device). I used our candle and lit the small pad up. I must have looked a little like an old fashioned town crier in my long blue robe walking around the house waving the small pad back and forth to disperse the rather strong smelling smoke evenly. One particular mosquito was unusually bold. She was hovering around Natasha and Susann's bed. It was my third trip into the room with my "flaming" repellent pad. The mosquito came toward me like a dive bomber. Since one hand was busy I took the other one and swatted directly at my forehead. The mosquito was no more. After such a great defeat, I should have felt victorious, however, all I could think about was "what would the supporters think about me slapping myself in the face the first night!"

I was walking along the muddy path with Enness. Our shoes were slipping on the slimy mud. We kept trying to stabilize each other to keep the other one from falling. She quietly said to me, "I have a problem." "Tell me." I said. She began to share her story. It has been almost one year since she lost her husband. As tradition here dictates, the family of the late husband can come and take anything that they want that belonged to her late husband. She is about to lose her bed and mattress, her small two-burner cooker, and a few other things which she uses daily. Her concern was not for herself but for the children she has

living with her. The kitchen is shared by our female students, as well.

As soon as she shared this story with me she said to me, "Don't worry! God will provide!" Our discussion left that topic and turned to all of our plans for the female students and this week's evangelism. Both of us got excited about all of the possibilities. The women have cleaned a compound (a group of small huts where her family lives) for a 90 year old Christian woman whose husband and son are sick, they have visited and helped a widow with two small children to get to the clinic, they have done a VBS for vulnerable children, they have visited a hospice and ministered to people dying of AIDS, and they visited a hospital for people suffering from mental problems. Besides all of this they have knocked on doors in 3 of the neighboring compounds to MBC – all led by Enness.

Enness is a true blessing to God's kingdom and our female students. And she believes what God says in Matthew 6:25-34. "...Seek ye first the kingdom of God and all of these things will be added unto you..."

