

Zambia Newsletter

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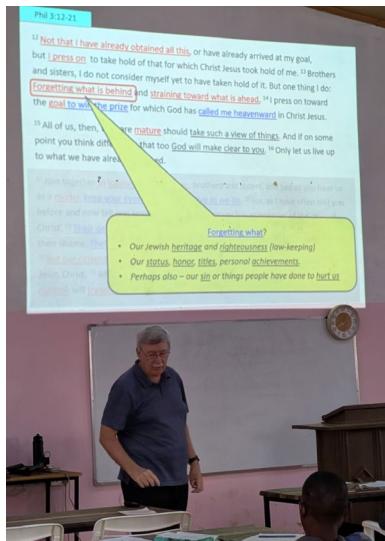
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It is the beginning of a new school year here in Zambia and we are off to a great start. Lorie and I are busy teaching and our enrollment in DBC, ACA, and Kerin's Kids continues to increase. Our piggery is doing well and our problems with water and power appear to have been solved. We do, however, face a few challenges this year, mainly having to do with the exchange rate which has been caused by the upcoming elections in August (cf. below).

Daybreak Bible College.

We have just begun the new school year here at DBC. So far, we have 10 students (plus wives) who have arrived. We are expecting between 7-9 more students as it takes time for students to make all the necessary arrangements (mainly finding enough money for transportation). Also, many of our students come from very remote and distant rural villages which do not have public transportation. It is also the rainy season and there are floods in certain areas. So, it always takes 2-3 weeks for all the incoming Freshmen to get here.



I am currently teaching a class on the book of Philippians which is one of the best books to deal with church conflict as it arises from people of worldly prestige/status. There is no better passage in the Bible to deal with conflict than Phil 2:1-11. I also consider this to be a foundational passage for talking about marriage along with Eph 5:21-34. It has been a great class.

Now that the school year has begun and our students are back from Christmas break, our students are now returning to their previous efforts in practical ministry. Every Sunday our students are going out to visit churches in the surrounding villages (going out in groups of 2-4). They are also continuing their work with some of the churches that they have started in the last few years (e.g., Shimabala, Chipangwe, etc). Our



students have been working in the village of Kabweza where they hope to plant a new church this year. And, they have two or three other villages where they plan to plant churches in the next 2-3 years. Our students have a goal of planting one new church every year in the area surrounding our campus.

Upcoming events this year: (a) The Zambian Youth Conference will be held at our campus in July. This will be the fourth year that we have hosted this event. Last year we had more than 500 young adults come from across Zambia to attend this event.

[The term "youth" in Zambia refers to unmarried adults]. (b) Our third annual Lectureship will be held Aug 7-9. (c) Fielden & Janet Allison will be coming again to teach their classes on Marriage and Conflict Resolution in June. They do a wonderful job helping our students with their marriages as this is a serious problem in Africa. (d) Moses Ananias and his wife are scheduled to teach a class in August and speak at our lectureship. (e) We have one or two other visiting teachers who are likely to come this year to teach as well.

Ministry to the Churches of Zambia.

One of our goals is to fix up our campus so that we can host special nationwide church workshops and seminars. Our campus is located in the middle of the country and at the center where all roads intersect in the country (being near the capitol). This makes our campus an ideal site for the Churches of Christ in Zambia to gather for nationwide church workshops and events.

We have a large Auditorium that will seat over 600-700 people and lots of classrooms which makes our campus an ideal venue. We still need to add some more toilets, build some showers, and fix up our Auditorium Kitchen; but once we complete these projects, our campus will be a great blessing to the churches of Zambia. It is very expensive for the church to rent out large venues for these events, so our campus will greatly reduce the cost of these events.

Besides the Youth Conference, there are several other nationwide church gatherings. There is the national Men's Conference, the national Women's Conference, and other such events. We also have our own lectureship which will grow in importance as it becomes more widely known and we increase our ability to host such national events.

Agricultural Ministry.

Our new students have already begun planting their gardens and are being introduced to the piggery. We now have more than 52 piglets and one pregnant sow. We are expecting to begin selling pigs at the market in June.

Water and Power.

As you will remember, we invested a lot last year in converting to solar power, and we dug a new industrial bore hole (water well). These two efforts have solved a great many problems that we have been having over the past few years. We now are operating sufficiently on solar power (which also has reduced our electric bill) and we now have enough water to meet all our needs. We are MOST thankful to all of you who contributed to these efforts this past year!

Election Year and Finances.

Every five years is an election year in Zambia. They elect the President and all the MPs (members of Parliament). And, like every election since we've been in Zambia, the government finds a way to manipulate the exchange rate and implement measures to improve the economy which seriously hurts our ministry.

I think this year is the worst. The exchange rate has gone from 28.5 per U.S. Dollar (two months ago) to 19.5 (as of today). This is a huge loss of revenue for us here in Zambia. It means that our dollars are worth 1/3 less than two months ago! The government does this because it reduces inflation and gives people the feeling that the economy is improving. This in turn helps bolster the favorability of the party in power.

We still have a few projects left to complete, but we will have to delay these for another year (or until after the election and the exchange rate returns to normal). For example, our bus broke down and needs major repairs (including an engine). Thus, I have determined it would be best for us to replace the bus, but this is a major expenditure and with the exchange rate, the price just increased 33% or more. So, we will just have to do without the bus this year.

We have also lost a couple of long-term, major donors. One such donor was my uncle Karl who was a major contributor to this ministry since 2004. I just found out about his passing yesterday and, unfortunately, I will not be able to attend his funeral on Monday. Karl was a wonderful and generous man, and we are deeply saddened by his passing. He will be sorely missed as he was always a great encouragement to me personally.

Christian School.

This month is also the beginning of a new school year for our Christian School, Aurora Christian Academy (ACA). We have made some MAJOR improvements to our school over the past 3 years. Our enrollment has increased from 76 to around 400, and interest in our school has increased dramatically as people are beginning to learn of our academic excellence. Our Early Childhood Center (ECC) is now completely full, as well as several of our Elementary

classes. We intend to build one more classroom for the ECC as it actually generates income for the rest of the school.



School children greeting Lorie on first day of class

We now have 10 different grades (Pre-K through Grade 9) plus the Vocational Training Center (VTC), and we plan to add Grade 10 next year (Jan 2027). We have 16 teachers, all of whom have their diplomas in education. Lorie has also done a lot of teacher training. Much of the credit for all these improvements goes to the Director of ACA, Jacob Likando, who is doing an excellent job.



Students in our new Grade 9 class

Despite the exchange rate, we do plan to complete the four additional apartment houses for the ACA teachers (which is of utmost importance). Thankfully, we began construction before the kwacha increase and we now only have about one-fourth of the project left to complete.

Kerin's Kids (Children's Ministry).

Kerin now has more than 40 children whom she is assisting with baby formula and other assistance. Kerin tells me that every time she goes out to visit the children in Kerin's Kids, she gets five or six additional, legitimate requests for assistance.

There are so many infants who need help, but unfortunately, we just don't have the money to do more than we can do. Kerin has such a heart for children that this is one of the most difficult things about living in Zambia – being unable to help so many children (many of whom will die due to malnutrition and weakened immune systems).