

Zambia Newsletter

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

David & Lorie French
P.O. Box 350070
Lusaka, Zambia (Africa)
zambiamissions@gmail.com



Web: www.zambiamissions.org

June 2020

After two months, the government has allowed colleges to reopen (even though the spread of the virus is actually increasing in Africa). Lorie and I are currently unable to return to Africa as our tickets were cancelled by the airlines and travel to/from Africa is basically impossible at this time.

Report: Bible College.

Just as I mailed out the last Newsletter, the Zambian government had ordered all the schools and colleges in the country closed. Thus, we had to shut down both our Primary School and Bible College. Originally, I had hoped that we could continue operating on campus (as we had bought up enough supplies to last for 3 months and had locked down our campus so that no one from the outside could enter and infect our staff and students). Unfortunately, we were not able to do this as the Presidential Order did not allow any exceptions and it was widely reported that the police were going around beating people who were violating the order.

Thus, there wasn't much we could do although our teachers continued to mentor students individually and conduct small group meetings in the student's houses. Our campus containment has worked very well for the past two months. We have two drivers who are living off campus and are continuing to provide whatever supplies that are needed on campus.

Our students have continuing growing their vegetables although they are not able to sell them in the marketplace on Fridays due to our ban on travel outside the campus; so we are now buying the student's vegetables (which our drivers take to the market on Friday's to sell at half-price). We want our students to keep up their gardens so they can remain self-supporting. The gardens also provide food for the students and our staff living on campus. In May I sent Francis (our agriculture teacher) to buy 600 (50 lb.) bags of maize (corn) which we can grind up into mealie-meal on campus using our hammer mill. Mealie-meal is the staple food of Zambia and our 600 bags will provide enough maize for one year.

Reopening of the Bible College. Although the coronavirus is still spreading in Africa (see below), the President has now allowed colleges to reopen (which we did on June 8). We are still maintaining our containment (no one goes in or out of the campus) as we expect the pandemic to get much worse in the coming weeks; but at least we are able now to resume all our

normal activities on campus. Unfortunately, we are not yet able to resume practical ministry off campus, nor are students able to sell their vegetables off campus on Fridays.

Staff Changes. It is with much sadness that I have to report that Sister Jean (wife of the late-Boniface) has had to resign as teacher in the women's program. She was doing an incredible job despite the passing of Boniface a year ago. Unfortunately, her health has deteriorated, and she doesn't feel that she can continue. Thankfully, we have two women who can now step into this ministry and do a good job training the wives of our students. They are the wives of Bruce Ngoma and Justin Muyatwa (two of our Bible teachers).

We also have replaced our Financial Officer. We have hired a new F.O who is a fully trained as an accountant and a member of the church from Southern Province. He was highly recommended by several highly respected church leaders.

The Spread of COVID-19 in Africa.

Although the virus has spread much slower in Africa than I expected, most experts believe that Africa will become the next epicenter of the pandemic in the next month or two as the cool season (winter) comes to the southern hemisphere. We really do not know the extent of the spread in Africa as testing is very limited, and many of the African governments have either stopped reporting or are announcing false information as there is very little that Africa can do to halt the spread of the virus. Many African countries did initially try to shut down parts of their country, but Africa cannot afford to shut down their economies for any length of time.

Even at this stage, the effects of this pandemic have seriously damaged all the economies of Africa. The U.N. is now predicting that the number of Africans in extreme poverty will double this year. Zambia is now in serious economic trouble and the Kwacha (currency) has dropped about 10% in value in the last 4 months.

Zambia is not the only country. As with most African countries, the level of international trade has fallen off significantly, especially with China (which is now the primary source of trade and income for most African countries). In addition, many African countries (especially Zambia) have borrowed heavily from China and now are finding it difficult just to pay the interest on the loans. Travel has come to a complete stop as most

African countries have now closed their borders to foreigners. Airlines have stopped flying except for Ethiopian Airways, whose ticket prices have doubled.

The experts all seem to agree that the pandemic will begin to spread widely throughout all Africa as the winter season arrives. There is much concern about what is going to happen in Africa since the healthcare system is too inadequate to handle the expected numbers of sick and dying patients. Thus, I ask you again to keep Africa in your prayers as things are about to get bad. Most experts seem to believe that the mortality rate is going to be higher in Africa than anywhere else.

Kerin's Kids (Orphans).

Although Kerin is unable to travel out to all the children to whom she has been providing baby formula, she is continuing to send our two drivers to all the families with the needed assistance. This has, however, stopped all our efforts to get our new Care Facility registered and operational as the government has pretty much shut down all non-essential operations.

Primary School.

The government has not yet announced when schools will be able to open again (only colleges can reopen). However, we have put in plans that will allow us to open the school on campus again while maintaining our campus containment. We have just installed a new fence around the Primary School with a separate gate to the outside road. Two of our six schoolteachers live on campus. So, we are going to open up the Primary School with four teachers to hold classes for the off-campus children and we will use the other two teachers to hold classes for the children of our staff and students elsewhere on campus for the rest of this year. This will allow our school to operate for all the children but keep the virus from spreading onto our campus.

We also have finally started construction on additional classrooms for the Primary School. I don't yet know how many classrooms we will have money to build, but eventually we need to build five new classrooms so that each grade can have its own classroom (as currently we have two grades in each classroom). We'll start and build as the Lord provides in the months to come.

Personal Situation.

As I said above, Lorie and I are currently unable to return to Africa. I bought our return ticket just as the pandemic broke out in March and the prices dropped significantly, expecting that things would start getting back to normal by July. It is obvious now that the pandemic is not going away this year. Our tickets were finally cancelled a week ago as there is only one airline now flying in/out of Africa and those tickets have now doubled in price. Furthermore, Zambia is now demanding all incoming passengers spend two weeks in a Lusaka hotel (at their own costs) before being allowed entry into Zambia.

So, Lorie and I are not likely to return to Zambia for several months. Furthermore, I don't think that either of us should be in Africa at this time considering that the pandemic is just now breaking out in Africa. Zambia would not be the place to be if either of us got sick and needed to be hospitalized from COVID-19.

Fortunately, our absence from Zambia will not have any impact on the work in Zambia. We have worked hard for 16 years to develop a staff that can operate effectively without us. I have been preparing for the day when Lorie and I will not be healthy enough to continue this work; so, the work in Zambia can continue quite well now without us. I continue to remain in constant contact with Kerin and the staff in Zambia (via email, WhatsApp and internet phone calls), and I am quite able to direct things from here in the USA.

Meet Our Students.



Mathews Chigali comes from Kalomo in Southern Province (Ndebele tribe). This is the part of Zambia where the Churches of Christ are most plentiful (75% of all Churches of Christ are located in this one province). Mathews is 29 years old and has been married for five

years. His wife's name is Ellen Lupiya. He has two children (3-year-old and a 1-year old). He has completed the 12th grade and has worked on a farm (gardening and raising livestock). He grew up in the Church of Christ and he plans to return home to his village (upon graduating from DBC) to *“teach the people about God and teach them agricultural skills that he learns at DBC.”* His family owns some good land as it has water nearby.



Patrick Chieshe comes from Kasama in the Northern Province although he was living in Kabwe (Central Province) just before coming to DBC. He is from the Bemba tribe (largest tribe in Zambia). He grew up in the Pentecostal church. He is 29 years old but not yet married. He completed the 12 grade and has

worked as a shop keeper and machine operator. Upon graduating from DBC, he wants to return to his home village where his family owns land and he can start a farming business while doing work for the Lord.



Herbert Mooya comes from the Central Province. His family is among the many Tonga (tribe) who have migrated up from the Southern province. He also was living in Kabwe prior to coming to DBC. He is 24 years old, still single, and has completed the 12th grade. He

grew up in the Church of Christ; his parents are farmers. His family owns land. Upon graduating from DBC, he wants to return home to continue farming and to work in the same congregation in which he grew up.