

Zambia Newsletter

August 2004

Dear Friends

Our time in the USA is swiftly coming to an end. We have now already purchased our tickets and will depart for Zambia in October. Although this is a few weeks later than we had planned, there are several things that need to be accomplished before we can leave. First among them is the completion of Lorie's Masters degree in Education. Just recently the chairperson of her thesis committee left the university and moved to Indiana. This sudden change forced a change in her thesis chairperson and this has required major new revisions in her thesis! Because we believe it will be most advantageous to our work in Zambia, we will need to delay our departure until she has completed and defended the thesis which we believe will be accomplished in Oct.

Our monthly support continues to increase although VERY slowly this past month. With so many people traveling in the summer months, it has been quite difficult for many churches to get everyone together at one time in order to make decisions about giving support. We have about 80% of our monthly support and about 80% of our initial setup fund. Hopefully, the remaining portion will be secured by the time we are scheduled to depart in October.

I reported in the last Newsletter that we had purchased a used Toyota from Japan. I just received word that the vehicle has now arrived in Durbin, South Africa. Our good friend in Zambia, Patrick Kawinga, will travel down to Durbin to drive it back within the next month so that it will be there ready for us when we arrive in October.

This past month I also made a quick trip down to Texas to visit with Doug Reeves and Rudy Wray from Sunset. We discussed plans for the beginning of the school and have pretty much developed a curriculum for leadership training in Zambia which we will begin soon after our arrival in Lusaka. Because I will be the only teacher for the school during the first semester or two, several teachers from Sunset and the USA will come over to assist me in teaching the first year.

One of those who has agreed to come over to teach is my Dad, Parker French, who just announced his plans to retired from full-time, located preaching work next Spring. He will be moving to Arlington (outside Memphis) where my brother lives and has just recently purchased a house in which our parents will live. This will allow my Dad to engage in other forms of ministry (e.g. coming to teach in Zambia).

Our plans are to begin the first semester of leadership training on May 15 of 2005. This semester will be divided into six terms (each term lasting three weeks). Each term will include two classes (3 hours each day), one in the mornings and the other in the afternoons.

There are several reasons for this arrangement. First, organizing classes around the "block" system (3 weeks of intensified study) will allow church leaders (who cannot leave their families/jobs for the entire 5 months) to attend those terms (3 week seasons) that they can attend. This will allow them to complete the courses over two or three years. Second, this schedule will also allow me to use short-term teachers from the USA (who can come for 3 weeks to teach). Since I will be the only teacher in the beginning, I will need this extra assistance.

Third, because we are organizing our schedule around the agricultural cycle of Zambia, the months of May through Sept (dry season) will allow the greatest number of church leaders to attend when they are

May through Sept (dry-season) will allow the greatest number of church leaders to attend when they are not busy with farming responsibilities (mainly in the rainy season).

During the rainy-season, Lorie and I will conduct leadership training by extension. We will select certain strategic locations throughout Zambia where we can host a variety of classes and workshops for leaders where they live. Not only this, but we also will focus on congregation development efforts in those cities where we want to encourage the growth of the church. This may involve conducting an evangelistic campaign or it might involve membership classes to encourage and strengthen the church.

Lorie will be especially helpful in teaching the women about how to organize women and children's ministry (of which there is very little of in Zambia). This is one of the reasons why Lorie did her Masters degree in "Curriculum, Instruction, and Supervision."

Let me take just a moment to share with you the nature of Lorie's thesis that she is feverously trying to finish before we leave for Africa. As some of you may know, America is quickly become a multi-cultural nation. Increasingly teachers are being called upon to teach classes made up of students from inner-city, Hispanic, Russian, Chinese/Indian/Asian, African-American, and Arabic/Islamic communities (cultures). A greater awareness of this in the last few years has created a great deal of interest in what is often referred to as "multiculturalism."

However, despite a great deal of writing in this subject, Lorie discovered in her research that very little from the field of cultural anthropology has yet been applied to the field of education. For many years now, most of our missionaries have been getting a great deal of training in cross-cultural communication and cultural anthropology. Lorie and I have both studied extensively in these subjects as it is imperative that a missionary understand the indigenous culture, if he/she is to communicate God's word effectively in another culture/language. It was, thus, somewhat surprising to Lorie to discover just how little application has been made from the fields of cultural anthropology and communication to training school teachers.

Thus, Lorie's study has tried to demonstrate the relevance of cultural anthropology to the field of education. In other words, Lorie's thesis contends that teachers (who will be teaching in multicultural classrooms) need to be trained in cultural anthropology just as missionaries are trained for cross-cultural mission work.

Lorie's Master's program has had several benefits in better preparing Lorie for our upcoming work in Zambia. Not only has this work deepened Lorie's understanding of cultural anthropology, but it has also helped her think through the issues of developing culturally-relevant curricula for third-world countries like Zambia. This will help Lorie to develop better ways of preparing Christian women as Sunday school teachers and school teachers (schools in Zambia also teach Bible and religion). One of our hopes is that our school in Lusaka will develop workshops and seminars to better train Bible teachers and school teachers in Zambia.

Lorie and I will be especially busy over the next few weeks as we now move into the third and final phase of our preparations for Zambia. Presently we are in the midst of preparing our shipment which will go out for Zambia in late September. Soon as this is completed, we will then begin efforts to move out of our apartment and store (or get rid off) all our household goods.

Finally, we do plan to spend some time with our families. We want to spend some time visiting our son (and grandbaby) in North Carolina, as well as our parents in Kentucky and Tennessee.

Usually our Newsletter includes something from Lorie (which many of you seem to like better than my factual reporting). However, I suggested she skip this month so she can devote all her time to finish her thesis and beginning homeschool this week. – David

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