

Zambia Newsletter

February 2004

Dear Friends,

We continue our fund raising efforts and are making steady progress toward our September departure goal. We mailed the last Newsletter from Birmingham as we were enroute from Wilmington, NC to Memphis, TN in a U-Haul truck (moving). We have, of course, now settled into a two bedroom apartment here in Memphis where we could be close to our sponsoring congregation at Sycamore View and could be more centrally located in the mid-south for our fund-raising efforts.

We want again to express our deepest thanks to the Pine Valley congregation in Wilmington for continuing our salary through March and allowing us to devote our time exclusively to fund-raising efforts. Their assistance has been an essential ingredient in our making this transition from the ministry there into the mission field. Of course, we now face the most difficult challenge in this effort as our income from Pine Valley ends and we must survive on what support we have raised thus far in this effort. I estimate that we have now raised about one-third of our support.

Someone asked me just the other day what will we do if we are not able to raise our support (or perhaps not fast enough)? This is a good question but it is not applicable to our situation. We are totally convinced that God has "called" us to Zambia and will, therefore, provide the necessary funds that we need to go. I use this word ("called") in a biblical sense and not in the way it is popularly used in the religious community these days. In other words, we believe God has been working providentially through these past few months to open certain doors to us and to close others. Zambia was not the only option Lorie and I were praying about last year. We considered several different directions (including Ghana, Nigeria, India, and several options in the USA). But, what became obvious to us was that, while certain doors (options) never developed or were closed to us, the door to Zambia was opened so wide that we could have driven an 18-wheeler through it!

We do not believe, therefore, that God would have brought us to this point only to abandon us now. Although we know that the next few months will be difficult and plagued by a certain amount of anxiety and insecurity, we have no doubt as to the final outcome. Successful mission work is not accomplished without great faith and, perhaps, this is why missionaries must launch out in faith like this so as to increase their faith and reliance on God. You might just say, then, that for us it is "Zambia or bust!" There is no turning back. We are totally confident and convinced that we will be writing to you this time next year from Zambia!

Since our last Newsletter, we have visited the following congregations: Red Oak (Petersburg, TN), Cyruston (Fayetteville, TN), Friendship (Murray, KY), Oakland (Oakland, TN), Span (Waverly, TN), Whitlock (Paris, TN), Fraley's Chapel (Corinth, MS), Pennington Bend (Nashville, TN), Lynchburg (Lynchburg, TN), Sycamore View (Memphis, TN), and Rutherford (Rutherford, TN).

And, since our last report, the following congregations have agreed to contribute monthly support: Shelby (Shelby, NC), Friendship (Murray, KY), Bell Fork (Jacksonville, NC), Red Oak (Fayetteville, TN), and Fraley's Chapel (who sent their contribution for the whole year). There are four other congregations that have also indicated that they will very likely give monthly support but have not yet finalized their decision. This brings the total number of churches that have become monthly supporters to about nine or ten (not including the four who have indicated a strong intent to help).

There are also about 15 individuals who have committed to giving monthly support to the work in Zambia. I have decided not to list the names of these individuals since many of them have requested to remain anonymous and I am not sure that everyone else would want me to publicize their names. We are most grateful to all those who are willing to make such personal sacrifices.

I believe it is essential that every ministry provide a financial report. Everyone must be accountable to someone. I am accountable both to the elders and to all those who are supporting this ministry. We haven't yet decided on what is the best way to provide this financial information. At present we are favoring the idea of providing a financial report at the end of each year to each church and individual who is sending us support (which we would mail automatically). However, we also believe it is important that we provide a financial report at any time should anyone request it (which we would mail upon request in the form of a Quicken report). We would welcome any recommendations or suggestions you might have on this matter.

One of the great privileges of this work is the opportunity it provides us to visit churches and see friends who we have not seen in many years. Many of these churches I have not had the opportunity to visit since our work in Kenya 20 years ago. Being a preacher for the past 15 years has not allowed me to visit these churches because I must always be at my home congregation every Sunday to preach. Lorie and I have especially enjoyed getting to visit old friends from the past! However, there is one drawback from this. We were visiting a congregation a few weeks ago where one person commented to me, "I recognize you but you look old!" I responded by reminding her that it had been more than 20 years since she last saw me! It sure didn't help that I had just had my 47th birthday the day before and was already feeling somewhat old! ☺

I also would like to express my thanks to several of you who have contacted other churches and friends in an effort to raise financial support for this ministry and to set up appointments with churches on Sundays. I especially want to thank my Dad (Parker French), Joe Synder in Ohio, and Lorie's Dad (Richard Waggoner) who have gone to great lengths to assist us in this effort.

I would also ask that you keep us in your prayers. There are three things in particular that I would like to ask you to be praying for: (a) that the Lord will continue to bless our fund-raising efforts and sustain us financially through this upcoming "lean" period, (b) that Lorie will be able to complete her thesis for her Masters degree in the next few months, and (c) that the Lord will begin preparing the way for our work in Zambia later this year.

Let me again remind you that there are two ways that you can help us. First, you help us by talking to the leaders of your home congregation about setting up a time for us to make a presentation at your church about the work in Zambia. Second, you can contact friends and family members in other congregations about setting up a time for us to visit their congregation. This is one of the best ways that you can help us get to Zambia (along with your prayers on our behalf). If you need to contact us, you may do so through any of the contact information below. Also, don't forget to visit our web site if you have internet access: www.zambiamissions.org

For His Kingdom,

David and Lorie French

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