

# Zambia Newsletter

## Zambia Missions

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Lorie and I have both been busy teaching classes each day. We have also been very busy dealing with a lot of other issues. I have been doing a lot of research trying to figure out how we can operate in the future without electricity (cf. below).

I would especially like to thank all of you who have responded to our request for financial assistance in our December email as we are facing many unexpected challenges right now (cf. below). While I hate to ask for additional help, we still need additional support to meet all these unexpected issues that have hit us all at once.

## **Recent Challenges**

Since our last printed newsletter, we have encountered several unexpected problems and financial challenges.

### **(1) Lack of Electricity**

Due to the lack of rain last year, Zambia is experiencing a drought that has now drained Lake Kariba (which is what Zambia depends on to generate power). Thus, for the past 4-5 months we have been getting only 2-3 hours of electricity per day (which is not enough to pump water up out of ground which takes about 8 hours since our wells are 300 meters deep). To survive we had to purchase a large generator (\$7,000). This worked fine until it broke down. As a result, all our student gardens dried up and died (as it took more than a week to repair the generator).

For the last few weeks, I have been trying to figure out what we need to do to operate in Zambia without Zesco (Zambian's electric company). I am convinced this is not a short-term problem. It is now the rainy season, and we haven't gotten nearly enough rain so far and I know, historically, that Zambia goes periods of drought that last 3-4 years. Furthermore, the increase in population and businesses in Zambia has outstripped the country's ability to provide sufficient power and the country has not invested in the infrastructure needed to meet the current and future demand.

### **So, what are our options?**

We either must rely on generators, or we need to convert to solar power. At first, I discounted solar power and assumed that our only solution was to buy more generators. But there are several problems with this option: (a) It costs a lot of

money to run generators (\$5.50 per gallon). We have been spending \$700 a week just to pump water! This cost will increase even more if I buy more generators to provide power to the Bible College, Christian School, and the offices. (b) Generators break down frequently if we use them as we are now doing. (c) It is also a lot of work to go to the gas station for fuel, fill the generators, and then turn them on and off when there is Zesco power. My point: This really is not sustainable.

### **Solar power**

Over the past few weeks, I have done a great deal of research into solar power, and I am now convinced this is our best alternative. Knowing how to use solar power is more complicated than I realized, but it is the best option. While the initial cost of converting to solar is substantial, it is significantly cheaper in the long term and far more sustainable than generators. I am still calculating the total cost of this conversion, but it appears it will pay for itself within 18-24 months (compared to the cost of running generators). And, once we convert to solar, we will have consistent power (no longer frequent/long power outages) and very little monthly costs thereafter for electricity and fuel.

### **(2) Piggery**

As I mentioned in our previous newsletter, our students can no longer survive just growing vegetables. The competition in the local market has greatly reduced their ability to sell their vegetables. Our students are now struggling to feed themselves. We have decided that our best option is to build a piggery (building for raising/selling pigs) as this will enable our students to remain self-supporting and teach them how to raise pigs (which will give our students another way to support themselves in ministry). Previously we tried to raise chickens, but the competition flooded the market. We believe raising pigs will work because it takes a lot more capital to build a piggery and raise pigs (which few Zambians can afford to do). So, we are now trying to complete the piggery as soon as we can.

### **(3) Vocational Training Center.**

Our Christian School is doing VERY well. Our students who took the 7th grade exams scored in the top 10% of schools in Zambia! However, we are under some pressure to complete the

Vocational Training Center (VTC). This past year, the Zambian government announced some major changes to the educational system of Zambia. This has forced us to add Grade 10 and demanded that we complete the VTC within the next 2-3 months. Students must now take the competence test at the end of grade 6. Only those who pass the exam can continue their education.

This now creates two separate tracks: an academic track and a vocational training track. Our VTC will enable our students who cannot continue their education (after grade 6) to get some vocational job training that will significantly help them to get jobs in the future -- training they would not get if we do not have VTC. And, since most jobs in Zambia are still manual jobs, our VTC will greatly benefit all our students (including those who go into the academic track) and equip them to get jobs after they graduate from our school.



Picture of Vocational Training Center

#### **(4) Unlawful Lawsuit**

It is a long story that is not worth going into, but the short version is just that someone (without our knowledge) sued us and won in court (because we didn't contest the case which we didn't know about)! Crazy! In any case, the court sold off one of our shipping containers (in which we store all our maize/corn). We didn't even know about it until bailiffs from the court showed up on campus to seize the container! This forced us to run out immediately to buy another shipping container to replace the one seized!

We are being sued because we are being confused with another Bible College that owes people a great deal of money and has actually swindled people in some business deals. So, in order to stop others from suing us (and to recover the money we lost from this bogus lawsuit), we have had to hire a lawyer to file a case in court to protect ourselves from future lawsuits. Yes, this has costs us more money that we can't afford to spend considering all the other challenges we are dealing with right now. It's all just part of living in Africa.

#### **New School Year**

In Zambia the new school year begins in January. Consequently, classes at the Bible College started on Monday, January 6. I am teaching a class on the "Mission of God" (cf. picture right) and Lorie is teaching a class that is designed to give our students and their wives some basic training in how to be a teacher in a Community/Village School. Lorie's class will be followed up with practical training as our students and their wives will be given

opportunity to teach in our Christian School and to work with our students in a spiritual capacity after school.

So far 10 Freshmen have arrived and 10 more are still on their way. It's not uncommon in Zambia for students to show up late for school as it is always a challenge for students to collect all the money they need for travel expenses. Also, many of our students who live in remote rural areas find it difficult to leave on time as public transportation can be limited. All our second and third-year students are back on campus as they know we mean Jan 6 when we say Jan 6 is the start of school. They know better, but new students have not yet learned time management! :)

Classes at the Christian School will begin on Monday, January 13. So far, we have about 225 students enrolled. Our enrollment continues to increase each year as our reputation for being a top-rated school is becoming more and more known in our area. In fact, some classes have already reached their maximum capacity so that there is no more room for additional students.



#### **Daybreak Mission Board**

The Zambian board for Daybreak Mission met on January 4<sup>th</sup> for their annual meeting. This board is of great importance as I make preparations the time when I will no longer be able to continue in my current role. It is important that we have a local board in Zambia to oversee the ministry and staff so as to make sure that the work continues long into the future. This is also why I am working to build up an Endowment Fund for the ministry so that there will be sufficient funds to keep the work going after I am not longer able to raise and maintain the financial support necessary for this ministry to continue.

