

Zambia E-Bulletin – May 25, 2008

Greetings from Zambia!

Theft. One of the biggest things that has happened since our last e-bulletin has been the two episodes of theft and the aftermath of it. I have written more about this in our latest Newsletter (May issue) which should reach all of you in the next few days (which you can also read it online: http://zambiamissions.org/index.php?option=com_docman&task=cat_view&gid=43&Itemid=109)

Basically what happened was that thieves managed to steal our industrial welder and grinder (one the first night) and then our Honda 11,000 watt generator (on the second night). They also broke into our kitchen and stole a whole month worth of food that we had just bought (\$2000). The total losses estimate about \$11,000. Since we have never had much of a problem with thefts before now, our security was somewhat lax. In fact, I had even temporarily switched the Night Security Guard over to days to supervise some workers doing some farm work. As you probably can guess, it was an inside job (someone knew that our security guard was not working at night for a few days, knew that we had just bought a month worth of food, and knew that we were in the midst of a two-week school break when there were very few students on campus). Because prevention is the best security, I posted a hefty reward (\$2000) for information leading up to the arrest and recapture of stolen property. I want people all around us to know that we will be aggressive in tracking down thieves (i.e., that we are not a soft-target). This, of course, quickly produced results and led to the arrest of one of the sons of the caretaker families still living on campus (John). Because the information was good, the police then interrogated the theft (which here means that beat him many times). He eventually began to give up information that led to the capture of other thieves (although several others that helped him have now fled). As a result the police have been able to recapture the welder and grinder, but not the generator nor the stolen food. We have now made major changes in beefing up our security so that we are no longer a soft-target nor are we perceived as such in the area. I seriously doubt we will have any future problems with theft. And, we also have now hastened the departure of the caretaker families (as we have been working with them for over a year now in an effort to relocate them). [BTW, caretaker families are the families that lived on the property for 40 years before we arrived – who ensured that the land did not get taken over by squatters].

Financial Struggles. As I explained in our last Newsletter (now on the way to you), we are now struggling through what is perhaps are most difficult period financially in the last three years. The theft (especially the loss of the food which we had to re-purchase, the payment of the reward, and numerous upgrades in security that we had to make in the last month) has seriously depleted our financial resources. Also, the declining dollar (30% drop in the last 12 months), inflation in Zambia (30-35% this past year largely due to the fuel costs), unusual numbers of vehicle repairs, etc have really hurt us this year. In fact, right now as I write to you, neither Lorie or I nor the school has any money at all! And, for the last two weeks we have been having to use our ATM card to withdraw money on which to operate (instead of waiting for the monthly wire transfer at the end of the month). But, what this means is that we have basically stolen from our June money in order to operate in May. We also are struggling to get our vehicles ready for the medical mission which is coming up at the end of this next week (see below) and we have got to find money to fuel (now \$9.00 per gallon) to transport our students to the Central province for the Medical Mission and our two-week Mission Campaign. **Point:** I know the economy is not doing so well in the USA right now, but if there is any way that any of you might be able to help us financially right now – **now** would be the best time to do so this year!

Medical Mission. We are just a few days from the beginning of our second Medical Mission (June 1-14). Students will be departing for the area on Friday as we have divided our students into six groups. The groups will be pre-positioned in each of the six villages in which we are going to conduct the Medical Mission (which goes to a different village for six days). The goal for our students is to build relationships (as they advertise for the medical mission) and then begin to do evangelism (in the days following the medical mission) so as to plant new churches. The Medical Mission does a GREAT job of introducing us (Churches of Christ) to areas where people have never heard of us (and frequently call us Satanists as they fear strangers). Please keep us in your prayers as we launch out in the next few days on what is our most important outreach efforts of the year.

Below is a picture of **Charlotte Bradsher** and **Linda Myers** sorting all the medicines in preparation for the Medical Mission. Charlotte is a nurse and the wife to one of our elders at the Sycamore View Congregation. She has been in charge of purchasing and organizing all the medicines we use on the Medical Missions for the last two years. Linda is the wife of Richard Myers who comes over to Zambia two-three times a year to conduct our Agriculture workshops and assist us in the development of our agricultural programs here at Mapepe (and the development of our farming works here). You also see several others (picture below) who were helping Charlotte and Linda with this huge undertaking.



Pictured below is **Glenda** and **Justin** (both from Sycamore View congregation) who are part of the advanced team for the Medical Mission (a group of five who have come over several days in advance of the main group to make necessary preparations for the Medical Mission). Also pictured is **Susan Brownfield** (wife of Marty Brownfield, cf. below). These three worked two days in an effort to sort and organize all the eyeglasses that will be distributed during the Medical Mission (eye clinic).



Pictured below is **Joe Godley** (who heads up the Medical Mission) and **Dr. Mike Murphy**. Dr. Murphy is from Searcy, Arkansas where he practices medicine and teaches at Harding University. Along with Glenda and Justin (above), Joe and Mike make up four of the Advance Team members. Not included in any of the pictures here is Mark Taylor is also part of the Advance Team. In this picture below, Joe and Mike are "attempting" to cook supper for us! Mike looks like he knows what he is doing, but I am not so sure about Joe!

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Beginning of New Semester. Our new semester began just two weeks ago. We now have 71 students in our program this summer and we are expecting about 55-60 to graduate in September. This is again an increase in the number of students we expect to graduate (which will be our third graduating class). Last year we had 44 students to graduate. We are most thankful for those teachers who come over to help us with our school. **Marty Brownfield** (pictured below) is here for three weeks teaching two classes: Minor Prophets and Hebrews. Marty's wife, Susan (cf. above), is also with him again this year. This is the third year that Marty has come to Zambia to teach in our program. He does a fantastic job. Marty is one of the elders at the Goodman Oaks congregation in South Haven, MS (i.e., suburb of Memphis) which is also one of our supporting churches in this work.



Family News. Finally, we were most happy to welcome our daughter, **Kerin**, back to Zambia ten days ago. She has been away at Freed-Hardeman University. Susan was especially thrilled to have Kerin back home in Zambia! (see picture below). Kerin plans to stay here at least through this coming December so to help Thomas (our director) oversee operations while we are away in the USA again this Fall trying to raise additional support for the work here. With this school still being so young, we feel there is still a need for someone to help Thomas in running things in our absence so that things run smoothly while we are gone to the USA.



Please pass our greetings on to everyone in the USA there who knows of and is interesting in our work here. May the Lord continue to bless you all in your work there. We continue to pray for all of you, especially as this is proving to be somewhat of a difficult year throughout the world with all the fuel price increases.

David and Lorie