

# Zambia Newsletter

## Zambia Missions

1910 Sycamore View Rd  
Memphis, TN 38134  
(901) 372-1874

Web: [www.zambiamissions.org](http://www.zambiamissions.org)

## David & Lorie French

P.O. Box 36893  
Lusaka, Zambia (Africa)  
[dfrench@zambiamissions.org](mailto:dfrench@zambiamissions.org)

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### **Financial Challenge for 2011.**

I hate to be another one those missionaries asking for financial help, but our situation is such that I feel it necessary to do so. For those of you who have been getting this newsletter for a long time, you know that I don't do this very often; but the economy in the USA has been down for quite a long time now and it is affecting all of us who depend on voluntary contributions. Although only a few churches have had to cut back on the amount they are giving to this ministry, individual giving has dropped off significantly over the past two years.

Because this is likely to be a temporary problem (as the U.S. economy always has had ups and downs), we have tried to really cut back on our spending as much as we can here in Zambia. We have laid off about 20% of our staff, have reduced the number of students for this coming year, cut back on our mission efforts, and have pretty much stopped all construction and development work. But, we've now reached the point that we can't really cut back on anything else. We also are facing an inflation rate here in Zambia of more than 10% which is not being matched by increases in the value of the dollar or by increased contributions.

So, we would just like to alert you to the problem and ask that, if you are in a position to assist us, that you consider doing so this year. My only other option at this point would be for me to return to the USA to engage in some extended efforts to raise additional support.

**School Opens for 2011.** Today is the first day of the new school year. We have just over 25 students who have arrived so far and we are expecting another 20 to arrive in the next 24-48 hours (total of 45-50 students). Last year we had nearly 90 students, but this year (as I mentioned above) we have found it necessary to reduce the number to 50. Greg Swindle from the Sherrod Ave congregation in Florence, AL is here two weeks to teach the first class.

**Greg Swindle.** As I just mentioned, Greg Swindle is here visiting the work here in Zambia; but the purpose of Greg's visit is much more than this. Greg is seriously considering making a decision to move here to Zambia to work with on a permanent basis. Greg is 48 years old and has served in ministry for all his life (like

myself, his father was also a preacher). Greg has a Master's degree in Bible and is finishing up a Master's in counseling. He has also has just retired from serving as a chaplain in the US. Army (served a year in Iraq).

Greg is married to Mary and has two daughters (Mindy and Clare). His daughter, Mindy, is the same age as our daughter, Kerin, and is seriously considering the possibility of coming over to work with Kerin in her orphan care ministry (Kerin's Kids). Lorie and I first met Greg and Mary when we both served in ministry with the Martin Church of Christ in Martin, TN. So, we have known Greg and Mary for quite some time and feel very good about adding them to the work here in Zambia.

Greg says he is 95% sure he is going to come, but he felt it necessary to first make an actual visit here before making the final decision. Upon his return to the USA (Jan 22), he and Mary will make this decision, Lord willing. So, please pray for this decision and for their upcoming efforts to raise support so that they can come sooner than later.

**Stephen French.** Lorie and I are also happy to announce that our son, Stephen, is coming to join us in the work here for, at least, the next year. Stephen (who is 29) is our "computer whiz" and is very gifted at organizational work. It is our hope that he will help us set up and organize things better here at Mapepe (e.g. computer network) and will help us with our finances (as our Financial Officer quit two weeks ago). We have had tremendous difficulty trying to find someone honest and qualified to handle our accounting. We've already gone through three people and still haven't found someone adequate for the job. Perhaps Stephen will help us in setting up things properly and in helping us to find and train someone for this position.

**Elder's Visit.** One of our elder's from our sponsoring congregation will be visiting us later this month (January) along with another couple from the same church. It is, of course, important that the elders from a sponsoring congregation make periodic visits to see the work so that they can stay informed and knowledge about the work.

**Agriculture Workshop.** Thomas Simubali will be conducting an Agriculture Workshop next week (Jan 17-21) in one of the villages south of Mapepe. These workshops have proven to be our most effective method in planting new churches (as we have planted a church in every village where we have conducted one of these workshops).

## Lorie's Reflections.

Greetings to you all and daily blessings for the New Year. We had a wonderful family Christmas with our Zambian grandchildren. Rumor has it that Santa woke Zainne up and ran around to "D-Daddy's" house...imagine! The children of the faculty and staff enjoyed this surprise visitor on Christmas Day. Santa was heard to say that the "Kerin's Kid's" Corolla rivaled the swiftness of his usual sleigh and that Mrs. Santa needed to find a way of "summer-izing" his furry red suit for his trip to tropical Africa before next year!



We enjoyed all of our children and grandchildren, and The Simubali family on this special day. We are thankful for our "little Jodene"



The rains refreshed the air and the grounds around the school. I was on the veranda thanking God for His new mercies and another year to serve Him when my prayer was interrupted by an excited staff member, Chico. You see after the turmoil of this past year we were all praying for renewal for all of the faculty and staff. Our answered prayer came in the New Year's Day Birth of "Princess", a beautiful baby girl born to Chico and his sweet wife. All of us were delighted.

The God that we serve is constantly seeking to refresh and revive His children. Those of you who know Chico's story (as told in previous newsletters) know that the marriage to his wife and now the birth of little "Princess" is Our Heavenly Father lifting up Chico in a way that the world never has done.

