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Keith & Ida Waddell - Zambia October 2015

Dear Family and Friends

The Lord gives strength to his people and blesses them with peace Ps29:11

It has been a busy time for us at home, on the Mission and further afield these past three months. A further complication to our work has been the rolling 8 hour daily power cuts. This means that you have to be organised to keep phone computer and light batteries charged. We have bought a two plate calor gas stove to help and a small generator which is used in the evening to cook supper, bath the children and put them to bed in the light. It was good to speak with Carol and Sandy at the beginning of July by phone and discuss our future roles. We also enjoyed the visit and fellowship from



Bunmi, the Africa Partnership Coordinator from the Methodist Church, who spent three days with us. We were able to share and let her see the activities and work we undertake with our partners here in Mwandi at the Church, School, Hospital and wider community.

A further link with home was the arrival of Jim and Muriel Gray from Hope Park in St Andrews. They were a godsend and willingly put their shoulder to the wheel, helping out with the children and providing needed back-up when necessary. It was great to be able to share our life and work with them. We very much appreciated their support and fellowship. It also made our links with Hope Park more immediate and live.

The lack of food in rural areas continues to be a problem. People are selling chickens and their own stock of dried-fish to buy mealie-meal. Some are only eating buhobe/inshima dressed with cooking oil once a day. World Renew and UCZ have intervened locally to supply rations and seeds to vulnerable rural communities and school feeding programmes. The intervention will also train communities in strategies to cope with the negative effects of climate change that are already taking a toll on vulnerable rural Zambian communities. The UCZ is very concerned by continued denial by many world leaders of climate change despite evidence to the contrary. However the UCZ believes in both prayer and action.

Over this time, we also had two sets of American visitors to the Mission from old friends from

Albamarle, NC, who are supporting the project to bring a better water supply to Mabumbu and this was followed by a visit later in the summer from other Mwandu veterans from Birmingham Alabama who helped with improving staff housing. It was good to catch up with them again.

At school we began the foundations of Classroom Block 4, funded through the Beit Trust. After Synod Senior Management on the Friday, the UCZ also held on the Monday a meeting of Mission School Heads on the standardisation nationally of school fees. We took account of the socioeconomic status, location infrastructural needs of the school as well as the prevailing economic situation. There are now agreed cost centres with certain percentages being allocated to them. We set a modest and reasonable range of fees.

In mid-July, Ida and I took a few days off to attend Catriona's graduation. We stayed the weekend with Gregor and Sarah and then to family in Loughborough. We enjoyed a happy day in London with Catriona and Kirsten. The ceremony for the King's College History Graduates took place at the Barbican in the City of London. It is quite a non-descript modern concrete maze of theatres; a contrast to the classical early 19th century college buildings. On 29 September we were blessed with the safe arrival of Maia Skye Lachlann our fourth granddaughter, and first child to Gregor and Sarah at Ysboty Glan Clywd in North Wales.


Early August brought the first phase of School Board Meetings for Keith at Kafue, Chipembi, Nambala and Sefula. With a week to gather breath and he went with Teddy to settle the dowry for Deophine at her Aunt's home in Kitwe, then more school meetings in Mbereshi, Senga Hill, Mwenzo and Lubwa, a round trip of around 3000km.

On 17 – 18 September, 2015, the Council for World Mission held a consultation to look at the Partners in Mission programme, evaluating its impact on the life and mission of CWM members. Representatives from CWM member churches were invited to Hong Kong to share best practices; articulate concerns, and offer insights. Keith was invited as Convenor of the World Partnership Committee and attended this conference with the Synod Bishop.

On his return, Keith completed the final phase of attending the Board Meetings in Mwandu, Masuku, Kanchindu and Njase. There are commendable efforts by most schools to address inadequate infrastructure. Shortage of staff and straitened financial resources are other chronic problems but being addressed by good income-generating schemes such as production units, poultry rearing and tuck-shops. It was good meeting men and women of faith in schools who are so committed to providing quality education for their pupils, in remote rural areas close to Zambia's borders with neighbours. The children are often from impoverished subsistence farming families, relying on rain irrigated harvests. It was good to hear of the accomplishments as well as the challenges and how working together with all the stakeholders from the community, they are attempting to transform these communities through education.

Ida has been kept busy over and above the administration of the hospital. She had a CHAZ Workshop in Lusaka for Hospital Administrators and Accountants and later in the quarter an orientation and Board Meeting for CHAZ Trustees. With the rolling power cuts (load shedding) the Hospital is seriously considering a move to greater sustainability through the use of solar power for heating water lighting and for powering other pieces of medical equipment. The cost of running fossil fuel generators is frankly prohibitive in the long term. This would make us less reliant on Zesco which would then be used more as a back-up. We are looking for any contacts with relevant experience and knowledge of the solar industry to help us with this.

Another challenge at the hospital is the rising number of malnourished people especially children who have been admitted and the lack of resources to be able to offer and provide appropriate supplementary feeding within the hospital to meet their needs while in hospital.



We are very grateful to Ronnie Sinclair and Caroline Morrison for their work in organising the crate. Again the timing its arrival was amazing. The 4x4 gauze swabs literally came out of the crate, into the steriliser and from thence to the operating table! For those of you in St Andrews Presbytery and Houston who contributed to this, we send our thanks. The Hospital Shop set up by support from Scotland has made just over K6000 profit this quarter.

It is good to see that this Summer's World Mission Magazine is devoted to human trafficking, concentrating on Malawi and Nepal. Zambia is not immune from this world-wide phenomenon. It is reported that Zambia is a source country for human-trafficking but we are much more aware of it being a transit country. The children we know of tend to be from the DRC and are Aids orphans or street children, vulnerable children whose needs are not being met.

We are presently looking after 5 such children. A member of staff on the bus from Lusaka had tipped Immigration, the Social Work Department and the Office of the President who stopped the bus outside Mwandu, freed the children and arrested the adult traffickers.


A task force has been formed to try and trace family in the DRC, so they can be repatriated. The two adult traffickers, called Grandmother Celestine and Papa Jose by the children are not relatives. The children are quite a disparate group and lack the cohesion of a family. There are 3 boys and 2 girls. Solomon is 10, Jean-Claude is 9, 'Big' Celestine is 8, Frank is 8 and 'Wee' Celestine is 5. The authorities asked if we could provide a temporary place of safety for the children. We agreed as the alternative was detention in the police cells at Mwandu. There are no care homes or orphanages in Western Province. The fact that both of us speak French prompted the authorities to ask us to see what else we could find out from the children about what had happened to them.

We have managed to find out the children's school the names of teachers and Grades, their Pastor and Church. The children understand French but speak Katangan Ki-Swahili. They are still all shocked and traumatised by events and in need of professional care and counselling. The children are covered during our working hours by Dorothy, Florence and Rose, who have all willingly stepped into the breach. Alicia, the wife of the American Vet Mission Partner, takes them to play with her children in the afternoons. The OVC have agreed to give them lunch, Monday to Friday. Again members of the Mwandu Congregation have donated meat, baking and extra vegetables to help with their feeding.

Mwandu lies on the Trans-African Highway that runs from Walvis Bay to Dar-es-Salaam and this is used as a transit corridor from the DRC through Zambia, Namibia to South Africa. Our children were smuggled from Lubumbashi across the border and taken by car to a safe house in Lusaka. From there they were to be taken by bus to Sesheke and taxied over the border to Namibia.

At the safe house the children were trained, using the most brutal means, to obey without question their traffickers on the next stage of the journey. These 'safe' houses in Lusaka are provided by rich, violent and powerful criminals who control the business. Individual witnesses and officials are often offered tens of thousands of dollar in bribes to turn a blind eye. The women and children being trafficked are in all likelihood destined for forced labour, begging and vending or sexual exploitation, to earn income for their exploiters, under threats of violence and incurring debt bondage. Another horrific end meets some children as they are killed and their body parts used for sorcery.

Our children are due in court on Tuesday as evidence and for the older boys to testify. Thereafter they will be committed to the care of Social Work and held in Care Homes in Lusaka before repatriation.



Ida and I would ask you to pray for the Lord's touch and healing for these children. We give thanks that they were discovered and spared the awful fate that probably lay in front of them. Please pray too that the work of the authorities is blessed so that these children can be reunited with their families and that those perpetrating this evil trade can be caught, and this modern open sore, can be eliminated.

With love, Keith, Ida and Mubita

