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Dear Family and Friends

As long as the earth endures, seedtime and harvest, cold and heat, summer and winter, day and night will never cease.

Even living in the city centre we are reminded of the rhythms of life the changing of the seasons. We are fortunate to have trees and a garden. Our maize and groundnuts are growing, nearing the time for harvest. The equinox past, we are heading for the cold, dry season after good rains.

For Keith the start of the year meant awaiting the results of the UCZ Schools performance in the Grade 7, 9 & 12 examinations. Our Mission Schools as a whole have improved their performance each year and this year was no different. Nationally Mission Schools outperform both the State and Private Education Sectors through the commitment of their staff. The UCZ educates almost 10 000 children, almost a 50-50 split between day scholars and boarder, and looks after over 500 teachers and other staff. Another task then was ensuring school places at Synod were allocated equitably and transparently. The shortage of teaching and learning materials is another chronic challenge.

For both of us January was the time for planning the year, submitting and presenting our work plans based on the Church Strategic Plan at the Management Meeting which was followed by a Staff Retreat. Ida and I ended January with a trip to Luapula and Muchinga Provinces to check up on infrastructure work at Mabel Shaw and Mbereshi. Lubwa was also visited as it has been upgraded from a Primary to a Secondary School. Ida was looking at work being undertaken to reopen the School of Nursing at Mbereshi and to visit the clinic at Lubwa. It was also a good opportunity to meet with Ministry of Education and Health officials outwith the rather rushed and formal Board Meeting situation. Similarly with hospital, school staff and clergy.



For us the next two months have been mainly concerned with School Board meetings in distant Luapula, Northern and Muchinga Provinces, then day trips to meetings in rural Central and Lusaka provinces and finally the Southern and Western circuit. Much of the development work in both Health and Education is trying to rehabilitate to meet existing areas of need to take the strain off existing overloaded infrastructure, rather than planning and building more proactively for a perceived future need. Sanitation and water reticulation remain the over-riding priorities on most Missions. The Shortage of bedding, means patients lying directly on a mattress.

Towards the end of February Bob and Lyn returned. We are grateful for their help and the support of their Church for the Clinics. As Ida has visited her clinics for Board Meetings, Lyn has held well-attended skin-clinics and Bob has helped Tommy Bunda, the Synod Maintenance Officer with general maintenance and plumbing and electrical issues at Synod and at Njase and Chipembi Clinics. They are with us until they leave for Kenya in April. On their return from Mbereshi they stopped at Chitambo to visit the place where Livingstone's heart was buried.

Both of our jobs are wide-ranging and have dealing with and serving people at the centre with many human resource and welfare issues arising from that. It is both rewarding and challenging dealing with recruitment, transfers, job descriptions, policy documents, grievances and discipline. The Education Department has just appointed 3 new Deputy Headteachers.

Mubita is now on holiday till Easter while Ellie continues at school for another 2 weeks. Catriona has begun her Masters in Development and has a job with an ethical gem company. She looks after the office and designs their displays. There is an Art Gallery attached, so it suits her very well.

Sarah has just finished her Master's in Education and has handed in her paper. Gregor is still a Chaplain at Bangor University and is preparing for his final Discernment Panel. Little Maia is doing well and enjoys feeding the "chookies" with Dad.

Kirsten and Stuart are well. They had a family weekend away in East Lothian in a Scottish rondavel for Kirsten's birthday. Iona and Euan enjoyed the ponies, lambs and hens and sledging on the dunes at Ravensheugh.

At the end of February we spent the weekend with Fiona and the girls in Lilongwe. It was Lucy's birthday. She is now 7. Ruairidh was away in Cambodia for 2 weeks looking at Church Programmes there. He visited the Killing Fields on one of the weekends and was very moved by it all.

Upcoming events are the Synod Executive Meeting in Kabwe for us both, then surgeries with Peggy Schrieber's American Team in Mwandia and a CHAZ Board meeting for Ida and a CWM Workshop looking at content, processes and tools before during and after Mission Partner Service in Jo'burg for Keith.

We are home in Scotland from 7 May till 21 July. We have a fairly busy time of deputation to begin with. We will be at the same address as last furlough so you are most welcome to contact us there. 93 Comely Bank Avenue, Edinburgh EH4 1EU. Tel: (0131 332 2242).

From the letter it can be seen that prayers have been answered and that there still remain a number of areas for your continued intercession. Our main concern is getting everything done and organising a smooth hand-over before leaving on 7 May.

With our love

Keith, Ida & Mubita