

DRU'S VIEWS
Fifteenth Edition – April 2009
Resurrection

But as for me, I know that my Redeemer lives, and that He will stand upon the earth at last. And after my body has decayed, yet in my body I will see God! I will see him for myself. Job 19:25 – 26

Yet we have this assurance: Those who belong to God will live; their bodies will rise again! Those who sleep in the earth will rise up and sign for joy! For God's light of life will fall like dew on his people in the place of the dead! Isaiah 26:19

We have just celebrated Easter and the resurrection; what a time of rejoicing and praising God for the miracle of Jesus and His promise of eternal life to those who belong to Him. My church experience has traditionally been a somber walk through Holy Week; reflecting on Jesus' suffering and death helps us appreciate the joy of Easter. However, this year for me, Holy Week has lasted for months. Since the end of December, death has taken the lives of many who were close to me—Robson Sankalimba, one of our Lifesong board members and grandfather and guardian of three orphans at our school; Grevasia Mwewa, former Lifesong School security guard and father to one of our children; Eleanor Banda and Mapalo (Blessings) Mukange, two of our precious children; and Vivian Woodyard, former UMC missionary to Congo and Zambia.

Malaria struck in full force the last two months. We've taken as many as 14 in one day to the clinic; it is often fatal, as it was in the case of 4-year-old Mapalo. I thought of Ramah crying for her children as I drove Mapalo's aunt and father home from the hospital the day he died; the entire half-hour trip was accompanied by loud wailing and crying, which only got louder as they were joined by friends and family when we arrived in the compound. I cried silent tears as I watched the neighbors carry furniture into the yard to make room in the house for the mourners. It is a daily occurrence in the compound, where death prevails; all too often, it is the children who die. Our security guard, Nicodemus, had 9 children; five died in infancy.

How do we celebrate life in the midst of so much death? I found the answer at the cemetery, when I attended Mapalo's funeral. This was my first time to attend a funeral in Zambia; I have usually made excuses to avoid them. The cemetery was as busy as an American shopping center the day after Thanksgiving—burials every direction I looked and the roads lined with cars, buses, and large trucks used to transport mourners. After the service, we walked to the area where children are buried. We had to wind our way through mounds scattered throughout, many with no markers; the cemetery is near capacity. As we came to the children's area, I discovered that two other children, one only 2 days old, were being buried at the same time. A man dug the shallow grave while we looked on, the wooden coffin we bought was laid inside, and the grave filled. The women patted the dirt with their hands, and a man uprooted a nearby cassava plant and stuck it in the dirt. This plant will wither and "die" but will later revive and form a large bush to shade Mapalo's grave. I found this a very poignant reminder that we must die to our old life in order to be reborn into our new life in Christ. The Zambians use this as a symbol of life after death. They also place small objects such as a bowl or a cup on a grave, believing the deceased will need it in his next life. Mapalo may have left us, but he is enjoying life with Jesus in eternity. This is what we celebrate even as we grieve our losses on earth. We know that our Redeemer lives, and because He lives, we too will live again in a new body that will not suffer or die!

Lifesong School

We are on break during April as we complete our first term of the school year. We now have a total of 173 children; 44 percent are orphans and the rest live in extreme poverty. Many come from broken homes, and their mothers struggle to find ways to feed them. We continue to receive praise and words of gratitude for the many ways we are helping—feeding, teaching, and providing medical care. Our children's guardians tell us they always pray for Lifesong School and its staff.

Eddie came to school one Monday complaining of a headache and stomach pains. I gave him bread, juice and tea, and he felt better, but to be safe, we took him to the clinic to be checked for malaria. He tested positive, so we got medicine. He felt well enough to sing and enjoy potato chips and flavored milk on the way back. When we returned to school, he refused to eat his nshima and fish for lunch. He had seen me buy bread and told John his headache would go away if he ate bread, so I took him home with me and fed him a peanut butter and jelly sandwich and an apple—the magic cure.

Our classrooms and sick bay have been given "new life" with the addition of some wall paintings by Sarah Marty from Indiana. The tall giraffe sports a scale for measuring height when we check the children's growth progress each term. These tokens of love have brought big smiles to our children and staff.



“My Children”

We continue to look for educational opportunities for Benson. He will submit a letter of application to the Kitwe Central Hospital School of Nursing this week. It may not be his ultimate goal, but he will be getting some training and will feel more productive as we research other options for the future. He is such a fine young man; I am sure God has great plans for his life. He touched me deeply the other day when he said, “Whenever I’m tempted to do something wrong, I see your face and I ask myself, ‘What would my mother Dru think of me?’ Then I resist the temptation.”

I worry about Kafuti who is under so much stress preparing for his Grade 12 examinations. He told me one of his teachers has not been to class in 6 weeks; when the class went to the head teacher to complain, she said, “You’ll just have to do the best you can.”

Fisenge Women’s Group

About 22 of the women came one Tuesday to clean my new house and prepare the grounds, arriving at 7:00. This was a service project for them, as Patricia and Terese are teaching them to not only help themselves but to also help others. We quit to have lunch together, and their new sewing machines were presented to them with much cheering and singing!

Personal

Yes, I moved into my new house at Kafakumba Training Center near Ndola on March 30. In the 20 months since I came to Zambia, I have spent only eight in “my own home.” The rest of the time I’ve been in guest houses or the homes of friends, living out of boxes and suitcases! (Foxes have their dens and birds of the air have their nests...) It is a joy to finally unpack and settle in. Now if I can just find where I’ve put things.

It was a blessing for me to host my friends, Tamlyn Collins, UMC pastor from Georgia, and Mike Carew, missionary from Australia, for Easter dinner. Benson and Kafuti came for the weekend, but Kafuti had to go home on Saturday night because he was preaching on Easter Sunday morning in his church. We enjoyed an all-American dinner of roast beef (with an African touch - monkey gland sauce), creamed new potatoes with peas, green beans and carrots, avocado and tomato salad, and brownies and chocolate chip cookies! We followed that up with roaring and vicious games of Uno and Mexican train dominoes.

Sneak Peaks

- Heard recently in sermon, referring to the condition of the roads after rainy season—“They’re no longer called potholes, they are drum holes, because they’re too big to be pots!”
- Heard on the radio – children’s choir singing:
“Jesus loves the little children, all the children of the world.
Red and yellow, **GREEN** and white, they are precious in his sight.
Jesus loves the little children of the world.”
- Monkey gland sauce contains no monkey parts!

Prayer Requests

- That the malaria season will abate soon, and we will no longer have to take children to the clinic every day.
- That our teachers will remain true to their calling and provide quality education to the children.
- That Benson will be accepted into nursing school and we will eventually find a university where he can study bioscience.
- That we will continue to be Christ to those we meet and will be bold in sharing the Good News of His resurrection.

In His service,

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*Dedicated in loving memory of Mapalo (Blessings)
Mukange (1 April 2004 – 23 March 2009)*