

PARTNERPLAN

Keith & Ida Waddell - Zambia December 2009

Mwandi UCZ Mission
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Zambia

But when the fullness of time had come, God sent his Son, born of a woman, born under the law to redeem those who were under the law so that we might receive adoption as children. (Gal 4:4-5)

Dear Family and Friends

With the start of Advent we begin to celebrate the coming of Jesus and his birth at Bethlehem. We are reminded it is a time of hope. This has been made especially real for Ida and me as we have experienced over the past year God's faithfulness to us and our reliance on him. No matter what the prevailing circumstances have been and the restlessness caused by the delays we have felt while waiting for him to answer we have learned time and time again that in the fullness of time he will keep his word. The Incarnation too reminds us that God keeps his word and it is a glorious fulfilment of his promises. As a visiting friend said while waiting for the last container containing much needed medical supplies and artificial limbs to arrive, in every respect God is faithful and he's never late. Needless to say the container did arrive in God's time.



Since we last wrote in September we have been kept busy with the daily round. The talks between the Government and CHAZ have still not reached any definite conclusion. CHAZ feels that the restructuring and staff placement is being done without adequate notification, consultation or collaboration. It is also a concern that the Health Budget continues to decline. The Hospital is now receiving only K4.5m per month as a Government Grant. Next year things could become even worse as the Government proposes to reduce funding to the Health Sector from 11% of the National Budget to 8%.

The AIDS Relief Programme is working well with its new VCT (Voluntary Testing & Counselling) strategy, widening this service and making it available at public gatherings, the fishing camps, Church meetings, an after-dark/closing-time service and even a door-to-door and whole family service. This has been an exciting development. Ida is also chairing the Mwandi Committee for World AIDS Day and is trying to encourage more community participation and make it a less hospital-driven event.

The milk formula programme still continues with 40 babies at present. A Grandmother regularly comes for formula for the triplets who were born in October. WHO are about to release new Guidelines for the Breast Feeding of HIV exposed babies. We have carefully set our own criteria so it will be interesting to see how close they will be to ours. Many of these guidelines are based on costs rather than meeting individual need.

We have had two deliveries by truck but only as far as Livingstone. We then have to drive to Livingstone and pick the milk powder up. We order it from a company who bring the formula into

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the country. They are also the suppliers to the SPAR chain of supermarkets. They deliver from Lusaka free of charge when they deliver to SPAR in Livingstone. We pick it up from there. It has worked twice now and this has made the task of ordering and transporting so much more stress-free. However, when we came to order last week there was no formula available in the country. So we are waiting and will e-mail this week. When we compare our data to other sites we find 2% less exposed babies born to HIV mothers who test positive so our program is working!

The Milk Formula Mothers Sewing group continues to meet at Simba. They are busy sewing MMH by machine on sheets for the hospital, since there are no visitors to sell their bags to. They receive a bag of mealie-meal per month as a contribution towards feeding the family.

We have also applied to the Church of Scotland for help to supplement the diet of underweight and malnourished patients with HIV/AIDS. This will be a great blessing for many people should the application be successful. PEPFAR funds unfortunately will not allow money to be spent on food, hence our casting of the net further.

We continue to keep an eye on Kandiana (The Old Folks Home). The Government so far has been fairly regular in their payments. We are given K2m (GBP150) to feed the 16 for a month. The residents still get their monthly bag of necessities from us. We will apply to the Church of Scotland again for help with Catherine's wages. She is the devoted carer there. We have ploughed the Kandiana field and on Saturday we sowed half of it with maize and soya. We will finish it off next Saturday. We had also planned their usual rice and chicken dinners for Christmas & New Year.

On Friday, it is the annual trip by the Pre-School to the Victoria Falls then the Museum for a picnic lunch and in the afternoon a game drive in the Mosi oa Tunya National Park. 20 noisy, excited, singing infants will await us in the bus at 0730h as we set off.

School begins again on 11 December. Some good news that we have heard recently from Lusaka is that the Ministry of Education has given the Church permission to open its first Grade 10 High School Class this year. So there will be a flurry of activity to get things in order for the opening. Thankfully we will have January and February to prepare for the opening. This is another example of the United Church of Zambia and the Government working together to provide public education for materially disadvantaged pupils. We are grateful for the Government's backing for this project to improve the educational opportunities for children in our area.

As regards the construction work of the classroom block, after I pay the contractor for the ringbeam there will be no funds left for the roof, plastering, glazing, wiring and painting. So work will come to a standstill now until we get further clarification from Synod and the Ministry.

We have received two containers this year one from CART in Huddersfield and one from North Carolina. After much prayer and with perfect timing, the American container arrived in early November with amongst other things parts for the prostheses, medical equipment, school supplies while a team from Hickory was there. The Hickory Church were major donors and had helped box and pack many of the items, so it was good that they were able to personally distribute donated materials to the designated recipients.

There was also amongst them an eye team who did cataract surgery. They come every second year. With this team for a second visit, were also a couple who supply amputees and other people with mobility difficulties with artificial limbs. Other team members were able to beef up the maintenance team and the hospital computers were overhauled by an IT expert. All good and useful work.

We want to thank you all for your hard work, contributions and effort with the containers. The contents will continue to bless many people now and in the near future. For example in the CART

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container we received made-up relief boxes containing lots of useful household articles. These we have given to flood victims and those who have suffered houses fire and lost their belongings.

We as a family appreciate the furniture that was sent for us. It has made our sitting room much more comfortable and homely. We actually sit there now, before that it was just a room we used to see people in. Mubita's room too is looking wonderful. Mubita loves his bunk-bed, we have a trunk for his toys to be stored in and the chest of drawers for his clothes. It is good too that we now have enough bedding now to change the linen and not have to do the washing, drying and ironing all in one day.

We are feeling at home in our house, even although it is small and we will only be in it temporarily. Nick is beginning work again on our house.

We, at last, feel we have a home of our own again and we are looking forward to having Gregor and Catriona home and celebrating a Danish family Christmas Eve with them and Fiona and Ruairidh. Something we have not been able to do for many years.

This afternoon Keith is doing the children's devotion at the OVC and then will take the roofing sheets to Simungoma Church.

We close by wishing you all a very happy Christmas with all good wishes for the New Year.

With love

Keith, Ida, Gregor, Catriona & Mubita