



Building New Beginnings

“Therefore whoever hears these sayings of Mine, and does them, I will liken him to a wise man who built his house on the rock.” Matthew 7:24

Dear Friends and Family,

The last several months have been very busy for our family. I had several really incredible field trips as well as a greatly increased number of ministry opportunities right here in Kabwe (which is a welcome break in between long journeys into the bush!) We've received so many encouraging letters and emails recently. Thank you so much for your prayers, encouragement, and support. Working in Africa can often be a real “uphill battle” against the culture, the elements, the powers that strive against the Kingdom of God, not to mention the struggles within ourselves. As William Carey said, “I will go down into the pit if you will hold the ropes for me.” Your prayers and support are essential to our success and ability to continue our work here in Africa. Your friendship is invaluable to us.

NEWS: It's a.....

we don't know yet. Well, ok, we know it's a baby! That's right; Monica and Frederick are expecting a little brother or sister around February 5th, 2012. Ashley has been doing really well and passed through the first trimester without any major problems. We recently found out that she has an abdominal condition called “diastasis recti”. While harmless in the permanent sense it can cause seriously increased pain and difficulty in the third trimester and birth. This discovery is actually good news in light of the undiagnosed pain Ashley had late in her last pregnancy. She now has a strict exercise program to follow and lifting restrictions. We're praying that she will be able to avoid bed rest this time. Please pray with us toward that end!

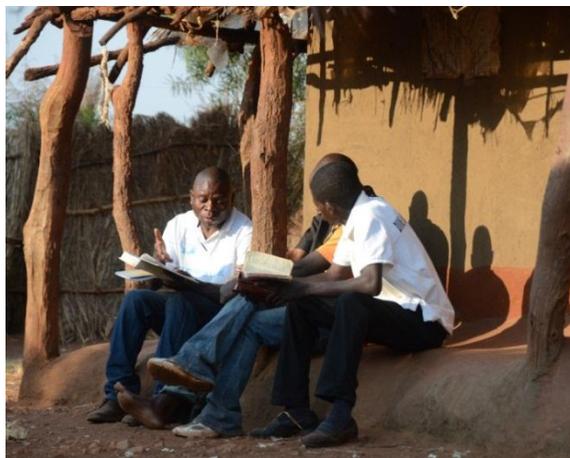
We are considering whether we should make the trek to South Africa for the birth or if the hospitals in Lusaka have improved enough for us to stay in Zambia this time. We have a promising lead for Fairview Private Hospital. The major concern is that, up to this point, no hospital here has been equipped to handle newborn problems that extend beyond CPR. We are hoping to find that Fairview has the doctors and facilities to handle infant complications, should that be an issue. Having the baby in Lusaka would save us a lot of time in travel, costs related to the trip, and reduce health risks to Ashley and the baby as the road between here and South Africa is quite bad. Your prayers for wisdom in this decision are again appreciated.



Check our blog in early October if you'd like to find out the gender of Baby 3!

Watching Them Grow

Since 2005 I've been working with a growing number of people in Chipata, a town about 450 miles from us (which equates to a day-plus drive with the road conditions out here).



After over a decade of evangelism training in Africa, I now get to see people I've disciplined training others to spread the Gospel.

I've also gotten to help with several rural, village church plants in the surrounding area. I usually coordinate my trips through a local “pastors fraternal”. This has been one of the most successful models of teaching, discipleship, and ministry that I've experienced. Because I'm regularly in contact with the same core group of people, I've been able to carry out some of the deeper levels of discipleship and family ministry with them. It's also been good for me to see where the strengths and weaknesses are in my lessons, as I see the way they develop in their walk with the Lord and within their communities and churches.

In August I headed out to Chipata to do some discipleship and evangelism training. I've made this trip often over the years and had many times of preaching, training, evangelism, and discipleship with these dear people. Some of the seminars were better than others- this trip was one of the best I've had with them. Upon arriving, I was surprised and pleased to see that they had gathered the older youth together to be a part of the evangelism training! It is very difficult to get Africans to understand the absolute necessity of training and discipling their children. In African culture children are spiritually (and often physically) left to fend for themselves. This is partly due to some leftover animistic traditional beliefs in which interfering with your child's emotions and spirituality can anger the ancestors and endanger the child. However, the main reason is a lack of training



I've found that teaching people how to use God's Law to show others the way to Christ, repentance, and grace gives them a very effective tool for evangelism.

film evangelism can do more harm than good. As night fell in Chiparamba, we drew a large crowd with our projector, loud speakers, and bed sheet screen. Unfortunately the preacher for the intermission in the film, a local pastor, was rather longwinded and cost us much of the audience. This was a little discouraging at the end of an already long day, but I guess it showed the genuine interest of the people who stayed in the cold wind to see the film through to the end. I was relieved to crawl onto my matt around midnight... only to be woken at 4am for a prayer meeting. This is a favorite of African pastors. They take very seriously the night watch prayers. It's sometimes hard to join them, but then I've seen the Lord really use these times to work on the hearts of His people (including me as I drag my tired body to seek Him in prayer). **"Watch and pray, lest you enter into temptation. The spirit indeed is willing, but the flesh is weak."**
Mark 14:38

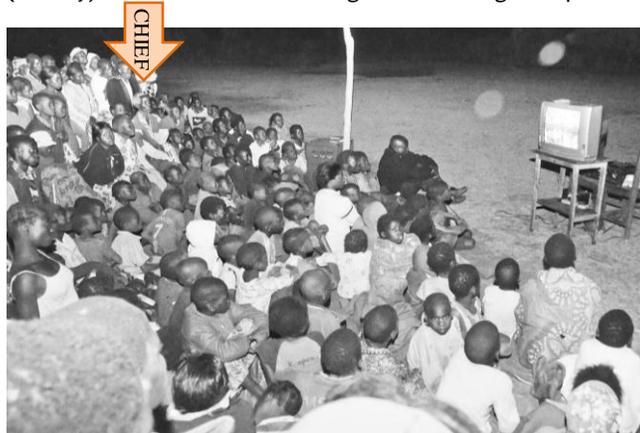
An, um, interesting part of staying in a village is the bathing and toilet facilities. My morning bath required a ¼ mile walk to a thatched hut where I was given a basin of water and a cup. The latrine (fondly known by missionaries as the "long drop"), while cleaner than some I've seen, had bats flying inside- I mean DOWN INSIDE. I strongly recommend avoiding these facilities in the early evening. It's at that time that the bats start coming out- and they don't care if you are in their way.

The next day (kicking off with another 4am prayer meeting) found us teaching in the village of Vwala, which literally translated means "put on your clothes". Nobody seemed to know how the area earned this description (although I have my own ideas). In this village we were able to use the evangelism training sessions from the previous day. My eager students applied the techniques practically in what I like to call "hut to hut evangelism", which is by far the most effective method of reaching others for Christ. The end goal was to show the Jesus Film again that evening. Unfortunately, after several failed attempts to start up the projector, a quick examination showed that the generator in Vwala was able to produce 600 watts of power... but my projector needed almost 700 just to show the film, not to mention what their amplifier and speakers required! While this was frustrating, it was also amusing to see how fast technology moves- I've never had a projector that could outstrip the generator! Looks like I'll need to find a dinosaur projector to accommodate rural village power supplies. At the end of the day (literally) I think our new trainees got more evangelism practice and application without showing the film. I've often found that God's plans in



Pastor Christopher has an obvious gift for child evangelism. It was beautiful to see the Lord use his skills in the villages, where children are hungry for God's love.

evangelism are so much better than our own.



Who could have guessed that the best night for evangelism would be in the witchcraft stronghold of eastern Zambia- in the presence of the chief!

The next village on our itinerary was Chiweteka, a "magical stronghold" (read: den of satanic witch doctors) in Zambia. This village is so infamous that witch doctors who come from this place can advertise their hometown on their sign to gain customers. Apparently coming from a place this evil is a kind of credential for them. Chiweteka lived up to its reputation as we came across one problem after another, culminating in yet another Jesus Film projection failure. When the projector's surge protector started smoking I decided we had to come up with a Plan B. We were able to find someone who had a television and an extension cable. We set the Jesus Film up on a small table... and over 150 people came! One of these was the chief from the area! This is a very big deal because without his approval, people from the village will almost never convert, especially in such a witchcraft dominated area. However, because of the nature of tribalism, if the Chief converts, many, many people will follow him and open their hearts to the Gospel. It was a privilege to be a part of sabotaging one of Satan's stronghold's in Zambia. **"On this rock I will build my church, and the gates of Hell shall not prevail against it."** **Matthew 16:18**

Throughout my week in Chipata and through all the village trips, I continued teaching and training the Chipata church group (including their young people) in God's Word and evangelism. I started with the basics- Genesis- and worked my way through Exodus. The issue of repentance is a confusing one for people coming out of an animistic or poorly disciplined Christian background. To rectify this, I frequently gave them pictures from the Bible (Psalm 51 is a great example) of what God desires in a repentant heart. I then taught them how to use God's Law to show others the way to Christ. I teach like this because I want them to have a clear understanding of what the Gospel is and how they can effectively communicate it in evangelism.

In Zambia the level of discipleship is like a river a mile wide and an inch deep. Most of the population has heard of Jesus and that He saves- and that's about where their understanding of the Gospel ends. This necessitates continual re-evangelism of the culture. The success of the trip was notably marked by the involvement of the church's youth throughout the whole process. Again, without the youth's active involvement in the church, this whole process will just repeat next generation. It was a great pleasure to watch them grow in God's Word and joyfully share the Gospel with others.

Where It All Began

God often works in strange ways. Recently I've become reconnected with the area that gave me my start in Zambia over ten years ago (as well as my first *and* second bouts of malaria- good times). Back in 2000 I did a lot of discipleship and child evangelism training at Covenant College in Petauke. Since then I've had very little contact as the college and surrounding ministries changed hands several times. In 2009 I met Marjanne, a Dutch missionary working with community schools and teachers in the Petauke area. I've given her a lot of the educational materials from our container, which she uses to help teachers improve their schools. I've also taught several teacher training courses from the base there. Staying at Covenant College again sometimes gives me a strange sense of déjà vu. I was also surprised to see that the cattle I purchased "back in the day" have been used to start a herd which now helps support the mission base!

On my way home from Chipata I was able to stop in Petauke for a few days to do more teacher training and follow up on some of the teachers and supplies. Marjanne took me to a real bush school and introduced me to Esther, one of the teachers who attended the seminar.

Esther is an incredible lady. At the age of four she survived polio, but both of her legs grew improperly, leaving one of them lame. She uses a simple, wooden crutch to get around, but walking is still very difficult for her. As a young woman she married and had four babies, all of whom died in birth or infancy. Shortly thereafter her husband left her. She always wanted to teach young children, however because of her severe disability, making the long walk to the local community school was impossible.

Marjanne occasionally visited this small bush village and was finding a growing desire for a school and Bible teachings. When she met Esther and realized this godly lady had a passion to teach children, Marjanne pulled together materials from our Container Project, organized for Esther to come to one of the teacher training seminars, and helped her start a bush school. There is very little currency in villages so Esther is quite literally paid in peanuts, the major local crop. She eats many of them, but can also trade for other necessities. Each day Esther has about 20 children, ranging in age from three to eight, to whom she teaches preschool and Bible lessons. These children, largely neglected by their families due to the nature of village life, have become deeply attached to Esther, who has a very vivacious and visible love for these little ones. As a father of a two very squirrely children, I was impressed that Esther, who cannot get up to chase kids around, was able to keep her class in line with small verbal requests and reprimands.

Esther has expanded her "school" to include the local cattle boys. In many places throughout Africa, the cattle herd is a village's lifeline. Boys around the ages of 6 – 10 are in charge of herding the cattle, and they do little else until they are replaced by other boys. After reaching this age, these boys are practically adults in the African estimation and are expected to work full days in the fields. Sadly, because of the lack of education or discipleship in their early years, these boys often come to trouble and become drunkards and thieves. Esther realized this serious problem and now teaches the boys as they have time to come to her. She is teaching them to read and write, but more importantly, she shares the Gospel and disciples them through their lessons.

Esther is a great example of what God is doing in Africa. She is a poor woman, from a poor village. She has very little training in much of anything, but has a heart full of love for God and His little children. There are many other teachers in a similar position. I often find "bush schools" where a teacher has gathered local children under a tree and, lacking any practical supplies, tells them stories and tries to convey what they themselves can remember from primary school. These teachers receive very little payment for their work, usually have almost no training, and often no supplies whatsoever.

So how can we make a lasting difference for Christ in schools like Esther's? The Lord has blessed us with several really effective avenues to make both an immediate and long-term impact toward lasting change. Through our Container Projects and Teacher Training Seminars we are able to drastically improve the school environments and the teachers' abilities. Most importantly, we equip Christian



Above: Esther reads to the children in this true village school.

Left: Because of the Container Project, these children have books and school supplies- a rare luxury in a rural village setting. Your prayers and support make their education possible.



teachers to use education in discipling their students for Christ. In Leadership Training we emphasize to parents the need to educate their children and financially/practically support godly teachers. My long term goal is to produce a Christ-centered curriculum that can be easily and inexpensively reproduced so that more African teachers can have access to real curriculum. We must reach the children for Christ if we hope to make a truly lasting difference for Him in Africa. This will be so much easier to do if we can put a discipleship-oriented school curriculum in the hands of the teachers and train them to make every lesson count for the Kingdom of God.

A Time to Build Up

Last year we got the opportunity to buy a half-acre piece of land. We're over halfway through paying for it now and have been looking forward to the day when we'll be able to build a house of our own. At the moment we're renting a small two bedroom apartment, which is a tight squeeze for our growing family. Additionally, teacher training and ministry from home are nearly impossible as the work area, children's play area, food preparation area, etc. are all just one room. We have found that having a godly household is a growing part of our testimony to the community, especially in Zambia where there is little concept of what that looks like. However, sharing this testimony has been difficult as our small apartment limits our ability to bring people in for training and discipleship. We would love to have a house big enough to bring pastors, teachers, and (for Ashley) local women into our home to train them in the Gospel and practical skills. It would also be beneficial to have an extra bedroom so that we can provide a place for our Western friends to come and work with us on short term trips.

About six weeks ago Hannes, a South African missionary who disciples Zambians through building-skills training, approached us and said he has an unexpected opening in his building schedule- would we like his team to build our house? This came as a surprise since we know he is booked solid for the coming three years. As I will otherwise have to do the building myself (there actually aren't any other good contractors in Kabwe, even using a loose definition of the term), this is an incredible opportunity for our family and ministry. While doing the building myself is certainly something I'm willing to do, the amount of time that would take away from ministry would be devastating.

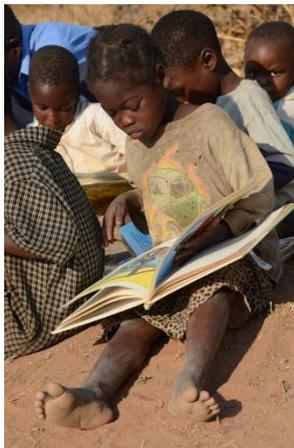
After much prayer and a little budget squeezing, we were able to come up with the deposit for Hannes to start building. He's willing to work in phases as we can come up with the money. Our goal is to get the house built to the roof before the rains come (mid-December) and save up to do the plumbing, electrical, and finish work next year. At the moment we need to raise about \$18,000 more to build from the foundation through to the roof. We'll need a further \$10,000 ± to put in plumbing, electrical, and fixtures. Because building out here costs so much less than it would in the States, the project will pay for itself after only six years because of what we'll save in rent payments. This will then free up funds over the following years to give us a head start in the printing and distribution costs of our discipleship and teacher training materials.



We are very excited at the opportunity to have a home big enough to accommodate our family of (almost) five and, at the same time, increase our capacity to be a witness for Christ in the community. By building our home now, we can greatly increase the effectiveness of ministry to the families around us, using our home as a testimony of God's grace. Please pray with us that, should this Mission House Project be in the Lord's timing, He would bless us with the funds to go ahead with the building.

Thinking Ahead

We are very seriously looking at doing another Container Project in 2012/2013. Please keep your eyes and ears open for Christian school curriculums, school supplies, Bibles, Christian discipleship materials, etc. If you hear of churches or schools looking to replace old materials, please snatch them up (or put us in contact with the people who have them). There is such a shortage of materials out here- the books and school supplies we brought out in 2009 are practically all distributed already. Seeing the way the Lord brought those materials to Africa and put them to work for His people out here has been amazing! We need YOU to help us collect a container full again!



Pro Rege,

Timothy, Ashley, Monica, Frederick, & "3" Keller



Bringing it home:

Pray for the Lord's provision in building a mission house that can greatly increase our capacity for ministry.

We have a lot of prayer requests for you this month!! Please pray...

- For Ashley's pregnancy, the baby, and birth decisions.
- For God's people in Chipata as they work to build His Church and expand His Kingdom
- For the Chief of Chiweteka to know Christ as His Savior
- Esther and the many teachers like her who do so much with so little
- Funding for our Mission House Project

Don't forget to follow us on our website and blog: www.KellersC23.com and www.KellersC23.com/blog.

Gifts may be sent to: The Keller Household, c/o ITMI, PO Box 7575, Tempe, AZ 85281
To receive a tax receipt, cheques should be made out to "ITMI" and designated to "The Kellers"