

Roy & Kathi Merritt
Sun, 30 Dec 2007

End of 2007



Kathi and I hope all of you are enjoying a great family holiday season.

Ours has been noisy. Even though two-thirds of our "team" are away visiting relatives, our house is still loud. Kids can't go out and play. We have had rain and overcast the last two weeks. Our courtyard (above) looks like Congo jungle. One rain came so heavy that the drain couldn't keep up, and the courtyard filled like ye olde Zambezi swimming hole.

Roads are slithery. Mudpuddles are deep. Gullies look more like canyons. Petrol stations get water in the fuel, so cars don't run right. One of our diesel pickups barely runs at all. It needs a new fuel injector pump because of water damage. These new vehicles are designed for developed countries and not tolerant of bad fuel.

We try velly velly hard not to complain. Usually we need more rain, not less. Every time I start to grumble, I bite my tongue. We need this water!

Below is Lamech Nsende. Namwianga Mission has been involved in Christian Education for 75 years. In 1966 the mission added a high school. Lamech was in that first class.



He became a teacher in 1971, and served the government 35 years. All that time he worked with the church wherever the Ministry of Education posted him. Now he has retired to a farm he bought in Mapanza area. The village he lives in does not have a church, so he is working on that.

Lamech is an example of what Namwianga is all about--developing self-supporting church leaders.

As you know, Namwianga Mission now has a teachers' college. Students who come here under Northreach Sponsorship sign a contract that they will work in mission areas of the country for at least three years after they graduate. I do not know the exact number of the new churches started by GBCC graduates since 1999. I lost count at 150. The number is around 200.

We are getting ready to send 33 George Benson Christian College graduates to mission areas of the country. Departure date and time is 3:00 am January 3. Three vehicles will travel a week to deliver them all--longer if rains mess up the roads. After this exercise, GBCC will have 88 graduates at work around the country in places where the church is weak or nonexistent.

Closer to home, the orphan/street kid program continues to grow--whether we have room for new ones or not. We average 75 youngsters in Eric's, Eleanor's, and Kelly's houses. Right now all of them but five have a USA sponsor.

We have done some name shuffling.

When there was only one baby house, we called it the Haven. The new house we called Haven 2. We are just about to start on Haven 3. We decided to honour people by naming these buildings after them.

So now . . .

The whole compound is "The Haven". Eric's House, Eleanor's House, Kelly's House and Soon-to-be-a House.

"Eleanor's House" is the one we used to call The Haven, named in memory of Eleanor Mann of Victoria, Canada. Eleanor supported orphan care in Zambia as far back as the 1940s when she sent CARE packages to the Brittell orphanage at Sinda Mission.

"Kelly's House" Honours Kelly Hamby. I cannot overstate how important he was to the growth and maturing of the work here at Namwianga.

"Eric's House" is named after Eric Rickner. Eric's family supported work here in Zambia from back before World War 2. Eric's legacy built the house where older children stay with Kathi and me.

We hope to break ground on yet another baby house January 1.

We deal with AIDS daily. Several babies have come to us with syphilis and HIV. We have lost several this year, two just in the last month. All AIDS-related deaths. That bad news must not overshadow the good news--that 95% of our children are in fine health. Without the Haven, nearly all these noisy survivors would have died a week or two after their birth.

May the Lord bless and keep you throughout the New Year.

Much love from Roy and Kathi