

The Murray Family

Report

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"And the things that thou hast heard of me among many witnesses, the same commit thou to faithful men, who shall be able to teach others also."
2 Timothy 2:2

April 30, 2009

We have just finished our first month of furlough and yes, we are experiencing reverse culture shock.

When we are in Zambia, people think we are wealthy. Our white skin and American citizenship automatically qualify us as part of an elite group. We can shop in grocery stores with nearly western standards and products. We have access to clean water and electricity. We can afford medical care. We own a vehicle, in fact, more than one. And more importantly, we can afford to put gas in it. We live in a large, comfortably furnished house. We have phones and an internet connection. Our children have books and toys and clothes. Compared to all but a few of our Zambian friends and neighbors, we are indeed rich. In Zambia, the average income is just over a dollar a day. Most of the people are unemployed, scratching out a living by doing odd jobs and buying and selling a few goods. The country has the largest AIDs orphan population in the world, which means that fewer adults are taking care of more and more children. Access to nutritious food, electricity, water, health care, education and most of the other things we take for granted is limited by a lack of money. So by many standards, we are wealthy.

When we are in the U.S., no one makes the mistake of thinking that we are rich. We simply blend in. Despite troubles in the economy, Americans still have a higher standard of living than most people in the world. Yes, even with our missionary budget and third world perspective, we are comfortable. But we are just a bit surprised by much of what we experience. We can get a drink of water from almost any faucet any time – no need to boil or filter it! We can eat whatever food we want – it is available, familiar and inexpensive! The roads are well maintained – we never have to wonder if there will still be a road when we go around a bend or over a hill. While our computers, phones, etc. work well, we find that we are using last year's technology (by the time we upgrade we realize that there is something else already on the market). We didn't know that Crocks (those plastic shoes with holes in them) were trendy – we wear them in the rainy season because they are functional. We still use one-sided paper (used paper that still has one good side), yet over here, most of it ends up in the trash. We look around at the houses, schools, offices, stores, playgrounds, and restaurants – everywhere we turn we see things that are no longer a part of our daily experience. Can we enjoy it? Yes. Is it where we live? No. At that is where we experience culture shock.



two markets – two worlds

We are grateful for our American heritage and all it allows us to do. We appreciate the way Zambia has sensitized us to the needs of the third world. The challenge is to balance living and ministering in both worlds.

PRAISE and PRAYER

Update on Pastor Mwailege and his son Caleb.

Pastor Mwailege's broken collarbone is healing.

His son is still having blurry vision in his left eye. It does not seem that they will be able to correct it with surgery; they have just asked us to continue to pray.

In addition, Caleb will need to have work done on his damaged teeth.

There is still no word on who might be behind the attack.

Voice of the Martyrs has agreed to work with the Mwaileges concerning this situation.

Praise the Lord for the many churches and individuals that support our ministry – both through prayers and finances. We are grateful that God continues to move people to participate in the Great Commission by partnering with us in Zambia.

Pray for more opportunities to share our excitement about what God is doing in Zambia. We find that when we have a chance to share what God is doing in Zambia that folks respond - despite the current economic difficulties. We are especially looking for help in presenting our work to additional Baptist and Bible Churches in Indiana, Wisconsin and Minnesota..

Praise the Lord for the many, many ways he has supplied our needs while we are in the United States. It has encouraged our faith to see the ways He has provided contacts, housing, cars, phones, finances and recreation for our family during our furlough.

Pray for us to continue to look to our Heavenly Father and not to the arm of flesh, to supply our needs. One of our most pressing needs is a larger van as we travel to the Midwest next week.

Praise the Lord for the good response to the handbag ministry. In addition to allowing women in our church and community to earn money, it allows another venue for discipleship. It also allows us to raise awareness of the needs of widows and orphans in Zambia.

Pray that we will be able to find outlets for selling the bags here in the States. We have had several good contacts and there are several folks who have expressed interest in helping to make the purses available. If you are not familiar with this aspect of our ministry, please ask next time you see us.

Praise the Lord for those who are still in Zambia – taking care of our property, filling in for our responsibilities at church and continuing to minister in our community. It is Zambians who will ultimately make the biggest impact there.

Pray for us as we continue to discuss and plan for future ministry opportunities. Even while we are enjoying our time in the U.S., we are thinking of home.

While we are in the U.S., our email address remains the same – mmmandfamily@juno.com.

We can also be contacted by phone at (334) 430-8891.

In His service,

Mark, for the Murrays