

MISSION TO BURUNDI

JULY
2019

creating a community of grace



Greetings to all! We'd like to begin by thanking you for your continual prayers and support as we minister in Zambia! We have seen answers to your requests of our heavenly Father and the results of seeking His glory and will first. Romans 12:12 tells us to be joyful in hope, patient in affliction, and faithful in prayer. In various ways, we've come to realize the power and ensuing peace behind these words. As we wind down our last six months in Zambia, we'd like to share with you what we've been up to since December.

Michelle continues in her role mentoring elementary school teachers to increase their skills in the area of writing and use of education as a ministry tool. Michelle has also been taking part in a Bible study with local farmers' wives. The group is doing a study of Mary and Martha and how women today struggle with the daily demands of a busy world yet desire to sit at Jesus' feet. It's been a blessing and a pleasure for Michelle to solidify relationships with this unique group of mostly white, African women.

The prison ministry continues to grow which means Michelle has her hands full organizing and correcting the Bible Correspondence lessons the prisoners have returned. Finding ways

to encourage them and give feedback through handwritten comments is a bit more challenging without face-to-face contact! We started in this ministry less than a year ago and it is booming. We need prayer for others to join in visitations, correcting lessons, and preaching and teaching. The enthusiasm and engagement are so good that we cannot keep up with the demand for visits and lessons.

In April, Michelle left for the US to help our daughter Rebecca who is starting an accelerated program to obtain a bachelor's degree in nursing and to spend some time with our granddaughter Sophia. Two days after arriving in New York, Michelle experienced pain in her lower right abdomen and was subsequently diagnosed with an inflamed and perforated appendix which meant it could not be removed at that time. The course of treatment included IV antibiotics followed by oral antibiotics to try to clear up the infection. The surgeon recommended removing her appendix even after it seemed to have healed since the rate of reoccurrence is high enough to warrant taking it out before returning to Africa. We are thankful for the Lord's timing and that the perforation happened just after Michelle arrived in the US. Our daughter and granddaughter are equally thankful to have had mom and grandma around for a bit longer!

While Michelle was gone, Tom's lifelong friend, Ralph, came and stayed for a month of ministry together. They helped with the training of fledgling coaches who use sports as a ministry tool to take the gospel into every corner of even the poorest neighborhoods of Africa. Simon, the All-Africa director of Sports-Link who invited us to help, reports that more churches have been planted using sports than any other type of church-planting effort. We think it may have to do with



Sports Link coaches

the starting point of building relationships and later on introducing the reason for our love and care for people. Students came from all over Africa including one from Latin America. Ralph also did most of the teaching for a pair of men's seminars that were welcomed in Kabwe and Livingstone since men are not often targeted for ministry specific to their needs and concerns.

Tom continues to mentor nursing and medical students at the regional reference hospital and is helping to keep the local mission community healthy. Injuries and illness can sideline missionaries from their work as they seek care for themselves or their children. A German ministry volunteer was diagnosed with African trypanosomiasis, a.k.a, sleeping sickness caused by a parasite that can



Making do when taking out staples



Thank you too for joining with us as we stay joyful in hope, patient in affliction, and faithful in prayer



Tom and Michelle

get into the central nervous system and, if not treated, is lethal. It's now a rare illness here but still a danger to look out for. An American missionary needed IV rehydration before getting on a plane for advanced care back in the U.S. Missionaries and their children have the usual need for earache, fracture care, wound stitching, and the like, that might occur back in their home countries, but are not as easy to obtain here.

The prison ministry team sees 100 or more prisoners per week. Partners have come alongside to help with special seminars for both prisoners and their keepers. Many prison staff and administrators have thanked us for the changes they are seeing in men's hearts wrought



*Livingstone Men's
Ministry Team*

by the Lord through this ministry. Christmas project monies have helped pay for printing lessons and congratulatory certificates. Each lesson is about 6 to 10 pages long and to make it economical for printing, we order 1,000 copies at a time.

As we near the end of June, we're looking forward to the arrival of the EXITE team that will minister with us for two weeks. We have a schedule laid out for both practical work and ministry impact. Alongside church members, the team will help paint a church-building inside and out in one of the poorest neighborhoods of Kabwe. The church's members and their local supporters have paid for the building and have a good start on a school next to it. Painting is a good way to help it shine and stand out among the other buildings around it. Ten days after the EXITE team returns home,

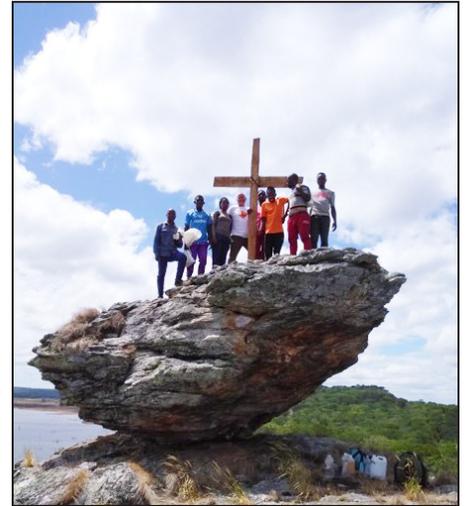


*Exploring future men's ministry
in Lusaka with Ralph*

a theological training team (Bill Vinton & Joseph Asong) will be hosted here so that future pastors and trainers from several countries can receive a 10-day intensive course. Tom's Thursday evening Bible study & Braii ("cook-out") sessions draw participants from the hospital and others who are looking for a church home.

As with many ministries in the developing world, we encounter growing pains as western resources are a draw to wolves in sheep's clothing as well as

Tom and Michelle Sanchez
c/o GMI
PO Box 9405
Grand Rapids, MI 49509
tom.sanchez@gracem.org
michelle.sanchez@gracem.org



*Sports Link Challenge - carrying our cross to
the very top of Mulungushi Dam*

those genuinely seeking the Lord. One issue has been that we discovered that some monthly funding was not reaching its destination for orphan and vulnerable child care in the northern part of Zambia and put a stop to the theft. The person who was responsible to transfer the aid is going through the Zambian court system and we have found that Zambians can be proud of the integrity, wisdom, and fairness exhibited by the police, prosecutors, and judge involved. God cares for the purity of His church, and we see answers to prayer in how He is bringing renewal.

Even though we've made Kabwe, Zambia, our temporary home this past year and a half, we look forward to beginning again with future partners at Hope Africa University in Burundi in 2020! Our goal of discipleship and mentoring new believers to grow Grace Church Burundi remain the same. Thank you all once again for partnering with us financially and for offering our prayer requests before a faithful and merciful Heavenly Father. Thank you too for joining with us as we stay joyful in hope, patient in affliction, and faithful in prayer (Romans 12:2).

*Tom & Michelle
Sanchez*