

**Africa Update
Christmas Edition
18 December 2009**



Dear All,

Liberty • Africa

Christmas Greetings from Zambia!

As the year draws to a close, I find myself reflecting on the year that was and all the good progress made here in Zambia. As is often the case in underdeveloped countries, many things have been difficult to follow-through to a successful completion. I have been constantly frustrated by the lack of skilled and reliable craftsmen, the lack of quality building materials, misunderstandings with workers, inefficient and corrupt bureaucrats, etc etc. So as I look back on the year, I greatly treasure the things that have been accomplished.

Looking out my window as I write this newsletter, I see workers planting grasses on the large fishponds that have been successfully constructed this year. Another team of workers are putting the roofing sheets on “the cottage “which we began restoring in September. The orphanage building has now reached lock-up stage and other workers are keeping the grounds from being overtaken by the jungle that has been rapidly growing since the onset of the rainy season. In the next couple of months, work will continue on all the three houses as well as on the drainage system for the ponds.

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1

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Christmas in Africa

Last Sunday evening, I held a farewell dinner for two missionaries who were returning to the U.S.A. Given the time of year, I also decided to make it a Christmas dinner. It was the first time that Christmas had come to my house since I arrived almost three years ago.

I had three guests in all and everything went along splendidly....house decorated, carols playing, Kris Kringle, traditional Christmas foods etc.

At about 9.00 pm an electrical storm came through which is not unusual for this time of the year. The dramatic lightening show and accompanying heavy thunder added to the magic of the night.

We decided to wait for the heavy rains to pass before any of the guests would attempt to venture home.

We waited.

We waited some more.

When lightening struck the house, the thunder was deafening. Outside, my dogs had taken refuge under the carport and remained curled up safely in their baskets. To my relief, the lightening arrester worked and all electrical appliances remained on and working.

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2

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The storm continued to rage directly above the house and it appeared that it was there to stay. We decided that I should drive everybody home since I knew the pot-holed, mud roads best and had the best vehicle to battle these wild conditions. The guest's car could be collected in the morning.

Just as the power cut, we grabbed what we needed for the journey and exited the house in darkness. Waiting outside were my very excited, if not hysterical, dogs. We clambered into the car quickly and set off into the driving rains. In the midst of the still frequent lightening and thunder, the driveway was flooding and taking on a river-like appearance.

My two dogs fell into formation just in front of the vehicle and began to escort us. They turned on to the road and we followed cautiously behind. Of all nights, this was the one they refused to be left behind.

At the first drop off point (next door), I was unable to take my guest right up to the house because of the dog situation. My dogs would more than likely clash with the four Rhodesian Ridgebacks there. T.K. had to therefore be deposited by the side of the road. She braced herself before disappearing into the storm. We, in turn, continued to the next stop.

As we reached the next corner, I thought my dogs would turn for home as they don't know this area well. But in high excitement, they appeared to be revelling in the situation. They continued on with the car. As soon as I hit the bitumen I speed off hoping to lose them. A couple of kilometres later, they caught up with the car as I dropped the second passenger off at the entrance to the second property. Again, I couldn't drop this guest at the door because of the resident dogs. I speed off again into the night.

The third stop was about another 3 km on again and there was no sign of the dogs as I dropped the third passenger off at the entrance to the house. But as I left this third property and rounded the corner, there they were on the road waiting for me. Looking a little bewildered but happy to see the car, they must have run about six kilometres by now.

Having wised up, the dogs now prevented me from overtaking them by running slightly apart in front of the car. We crawled home, me relieved that no other cars were about and that the dogs were neither lost nor attacked by other dogs. On arriving home, the dogs were still full of energy and continued romping around with one another. I was worn out.

It continued to rain all night.



Coming to Australia

The time has come for me to actively promote the Children of Destiny project again in person. I will therefore be travelling back to Australia for five weeks during February/March 2010.

During this visit, I will be organising some project presentation and fundraising events. Details for these will follow in next month's newsletter. Since I have five weeks, my calendar is also open to doing additional presentations with those groups and individuals interested in hearing more about the project.

So please let me know if you are interested.

That's it from me for this month.
Have a great Christmas,

Mike

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4

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Roofing sheets go up on “The Cottage”. Guests may be able to stay in this house in the future

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5

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