

Africa Update  
31 March 2010



Dear All,

Greetings again from Zambia!

I'm just back after six weeks overseas but I've already had quite an ordeal with the weather and power supply. Here is a weather summary covering the first 4 days of my return (Thank God that laptops have batteries!):

**Late Wednesday evening** – electrical storm leading to power outage.

Electrical lines down on the roadside. It's my first night back.

**Thursday** – Hot and sticky. Still no power. Fresh food shopping delayed until power comes on again. Power comes back on during the evening.

**Friday** – Hot and sticky. Fresh food shopping among other activities. Foods that need to be frozen go into the freezer.

**Saturday** – Hot and sticky. Wild electrical storm arrives in the afternoon.

Water comes in to the house from rains beating against the closed louver windows. Towels are used to mop up water blowing in to the house. Power outage for the rest of the day and night. Saturday night on the laptop in the dark until battery drains. Sandwich for dinner.

**Sunday** – Hot and sticky. Power back on early morning. Washing the towels used to mop up water from yesterday's storm. Opportunity to charge laptop, mobile phone and emergency lantern. Another electrical storm arrives early afternoon. Power outage again. Winds are fiercer than yesterday's storm and more water is blown into the house. Branches blown off trees outside. Same towels (not yet dry) are used to mop up water along with extra towels because of increased flooding this time. Towels will need to be washed again when the power comes back on. Sandwich again for dinner in the dark. Back onto the recharged laptop while waiting for power to come back.....

On a brighter note, whilst overseas in Australia, I was able to raise much-needed funds to continue construction on the children's project here in Zambia. With money still coming in, I think approximately AUD \$50,000.00 has been raised over the last two months. There were many people who contributed in various ways to the fundraising events. It is not possible to list you all here but please know that I am incredibly grateful to you all. Particular thanks goes to Pat and Helen La Manna, Bill and Sheila Carew (my parents) and various members of Liberty International Fellowship for coordinating and organising the two main fundraising events that were held. Thanks also goes to those who contributed to my personal support (I wouldn't be able to run the project without contributions to my own upkeep!). So thank-you, thank-you, thank-you!

Whilst back in Australia, an interesting development took place. I am very happy to announce my engagement to be married to Miss Regina Soosai. Regina will be a very welcome part of my life here.



Regina practices as a midwife in Australia and has visited Zambia over the last three years to participate in women's conferences here. She is very talented in working with both babies and children. Having grown up in Malaysia, Regina sees some parallels between the climates and topographies of Malaysia and Zambia. It's a tough woman, though, who wants to take on the living conditions of Zambia.

As annoying as the power cuts and storms have been, I was very happy when I arrived back to the project property in Garneton. The six workers had done an excellent job in maintaining and guarding the property. Nothing was stolen over the six weeks that I was absent and the grounds and buildings had been beautifully maintained. The two dogs looked happy and well cared for and had been bathed and treated for parasites. I've found some very loyal and trustworthy staff here.

## **Antz in Ya Pantz!**

On different occasions in the past, I have been talking to workers outside to have them suddenly jump up and down and run for cover. Then follows a rapid tearing off of clothing. Biting Ants! When it happens, the worker is usually unaware of them until numbers have already ascended their person. Then they bite simultaneously and it's quite painful. Over the past few days, I have experienced this twice myself whilst walking around the property. It was a rapid flight into the house on both occasions. After stripping down quickly, there were still ants crawling over me and biting. And even after they were all dealt with, it took awhile for my mind to recover from the phantom ants still biting.

With Easter arriving, the year is marching on.  
It's time for me to sign off but I trust you will have an enjoyable and meaningful Easter break.

Until next month,  
Stay well,

*Mike*