

DESTINATION ZAMBIA

the rasmussen family update

Dear First Baptist Church,

It's the rain season. Some days the rain comes in large pelting drops while the sun is still shining brightly. Some days it comes in stinging sheets driven by fierce winds that bend the trees. Still other times, it is a seemingly never-ending drizzle accompanied by a perpetual dusk.

Today, its just a drizzle. Seven people walk with heads bowed and shoulders hunched against the rain. They skirt the once dry paths which have now turned to small creeks. They make slow progress where the thick mud cannot be avoided. They come to a ravine. Earlier in the year it was passable. Now, it is filled with water. There is a small canoe to make the treacherous crossing, but it is on the wrong side. Their trek was just extended by more than a mile. No one will dare the swim to get the boat because of the real threat of crocodiles. A man, known for his strength and vitality, was taken just one year ago at this very spot.

Dissapointed, but not defeated, they continue on their way. What is one and a half more miles in a walk, which, for some of them, is more than ten? One of the two elderly women in the group stops to rest. She is thought to be more than seventy, though her exact age is not known. The other one, who is her sister, is just slightly younger. After a brief respite, they are on the way again.

After hours of walking, and a brief stop at friends' houses to change into the dry clothes they carried, they arrive to friendly greetings and warm welcomes at our church. It's a long way to walk each Sunday, and the rains and overflowing river make it longer and more difficult now, but it is worth it to them. They enjoy the fellowship and exposition of the Scriptures unique in the area to this ministry.

I greet each one with a mix of joy and humility. I praise God for them as they encourage the other believers. I have been moved and inspired by their faithfulness. But, I know they will not be able to continue to come. The long walk, which is only barely possible now, will more than double by the peak of the rain season. They need a church in their area.

To that end, we have started a Bible study in that section of the chiefdom called Mapota. Months ago, before the rains, we began to survey the area and pray about starting a work there. There are no churches, but we found that many hunger for the teaching of God's Word. I knew the work would require a team, and God has raised up men in our first church to help with the mission. They are eager to be a part of bringing the first church to Mapota and easing the burden of our dear members from that area.

Please pray with us. It is a difficult work in various ways. The travel is getting harder each week, but logistics is only one part of the challenge. We also have enemies that don't want the

work to succeed. They have leveraged the superstitions of the people by spreading rumors about some of our team being involved in witchcraft. This has taken a toll on the work, but by the grace of God, we have begun to recover.

Every time there is a setback I am encouraged by the different testimonies shared at the Bible study. One woman explained that she has a Bible and reads it often, but until we came she could never understand it. It was always like reading any other book, but now, she says, it is like reading a personal letter. One man begged us not to stop coming when things become more difficult. He said the teaching has changed him and he wants his wife to hear it too.

With your prayer we will be able to continue, and the fruit of our labor will be accounted to you. You are a blessing to us. As we grow in God's grace through the challenges we face, we are thankful to you for your part in making our service here possible. We pray that you will also grow in God's grace as you continue to sacrifice your time in prayer and resources in financial support of this ministry. May God richly bless you.

With much love and gratefulness,
Wade and Donna Rasmussen

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