

October 1-2

The flight was on time for departure and thus began the 2009 trip to Zambia. This flight, however, was not direct, non-stop as have been the rest. We will be stopping at Dakar in Senegal. It will break the trip up into two sections. The first leg is just over 7 hours and the second just over 8 hours. Traveling that long is just not enjoyable. The seats are made for small people. I did get the bulkhead seat which meant a good deal of leg room but they have this roll on one side of the belt that is an airbag. I guess it is supposed to work like a cars to prevent someone from hitting the bulkhead. However, since it fit between me and the armrest it narrows the sitting area by 2 to 3 inches. If it were to deploy it would deploy between me and the person sitting next to me so I don't know how helpful that would prove to be in a pinch.

The flight was OK. I met several people around me and we had a chance to talk a bit especially when we were on the ground in Dakar. Not much about the flight. It arrived a bit ahead of time at around 4:30pm this afternoon. After going through passport control I went to find my bags so I could call the guest house and get a shower (it is needed by this time). I managed to find one of my bags but not the other. When I went to the luggage desk she looked and said that it had been checked from Washington through to Livingston. Both had been checked but one was offloaded. Thank goodness it was the one with my clothes in it. At least I will be able to change and such.

Finally I arrive at the Dove's Nest Guest House. It is nice but they have expanded it some since last year and the place is really busy tonight. I get a shower and a meal and prepare to settle down for the night. My first night on African soil. Tomorrow it is Livingston and then Siavonga.

October 3

Today Audrey and I are married 35 years. Happy Anniversary when you read this my dear. I did sleep fairly well last night. I got up a couple of times but otherwise I did sleep. Usually it takes a couple of days to acclimate to the time change. I am 6 hours ahead here in Africa. My flight to Livingstone leaves at about 10:40. The flight is an hour and a half so I should be down in Livingstone at around 12:30. I am not sure who will be meeting me. I know Charles Phiri will be there. He has been anxious to see me for two weeks.

The flight arrived on time and it began to rain. Rain! It's too soon I think. The day is overcast and cool. There top meet me are Roy and Kathi Merrit with big smiles and Charles Phiri busting out with a huge grin. Roy and Kathy have come in two trucks. One I will take and head on to Siavonga. I am to preach tomorrow morning so I will not be able to visit with them beyond a couple of hours in Livingstone. We decide to go for lunch before we leave. At the airport I nearly emptied my smaller bag of all the things that I brought for them plus Kathi's laptop computer from Richard Duke. We have a nice lunch and Charles and I head for Siavonga. Roy warns me about the road toimba. It is under construction (finally) but the detours are dusty and rough in places. He is right. You can almost suffocate on the dust from a big lorrie, especially if you get behind one. But we weather it fairly well. Charles brings me up to date on all of the friends and brethren that I know. Finally we hit the good road and arrive at Kolomo and we stop for diesel before heading out on the 440km to Siavonga. It is already late enough for me to know that we will be driving in the dark. I do not care for that but we need to be there tonight.

Along the way, somewhere between Choma and Monze, it starts to rain. Not hard but steady and light. Then at times it becomes heavier. This is really not what I want to see but we push on. Finally we arrive at around 10:30 pm and go to Eagle's Rest for me to sign in and off load my stuff before going to Charles' house. It seems that there are a few people who are waiting up for me to arrive so that they can say hello. One of them is Mrs. Chibanga. Always with a big smile she has come for Violet Phiri's kitchen party (more about that later). She has gotten the OK from her husband to stay for our lectureship here in Siavonga this weekend. She is a real joy. After greetings and a bit of visiting I head for my room to have a shower. It is 12:30am when I arrive and after 1am when I finally get to bed.

Oh yes, the kitchen party. It is a lot like a bridal shower except it seems to be a much bigger thing in Zambia. Part western and still African. Usually many people are invited for an afternoon of gifts and chatting. It closes out a couple of days where the women spend time with the bride giving her instructions on being married and such. I understand that for Violet's there were upwards of 300 people from different parts of the country. She received a lot of presents for her house. When I arrived at Charles' house every inch of floor space was taken up with sleeping women and children. Many will leave in the morning to return home

October 4

Up fairly early to get ready for today's activities, Bible class and services. I managed to sleep fairly well for my first night in Siavonga. First it is to Charles' for breakfast; usually tea and bread and a few minutes of visiting. We head to the building to await the church's arrival. Eventually they begin to come in and I begin to greet old friends and meet a few new ones. We wait for the group from Kariba to arrive but they are delayed so we start Bible class and eventually they come in. It is a familiar gathering as I speak to them. I teach class for about an hour and the sermon lasts about an hour and a half (maybe a bit less).



I was looking at the clock on the wall but all it said was 5 minutes after 12. Finally I figured out that it did not work. Eventually the services are over around 1pm and we head to Charles' for lunch and more visiting. Eventually we head for Eagle's Rest where I need to get my things organized. I pretty much dumped everything when I arrived last night. Abigail and Bridgett will be cleaning the truck inside and out to pick up some travel money for Monday when they must return to school. Violet wants top help Papa so she volunteers to fold and organize my clothes on the shelf.



Violet Phiri and Winnie (Charles' granddaughter)

As the girls are working on the truck I sit and talk with Violet (my daughter) about marriage and such. We chat for quite a while. She is a solid and impressive young woman. She will return to Chirundu tomorrow for work and I will likely not see her until before her wedding on the 24th.

As we wrap things up and prepare to return everyone to Charles' house. Tomorrow we are traveling to Lusaka early. The girls will catch a bus to Namwianga in Lusaka. We will drop Violet and Chilimina's wife at the junction to get transport to Chirundu. Also traveling with us will be a truck, Fredrick Maambo, Benjamin Mvula and a young preacher named Ferdinand. We will be purchasing the materials to repair wells as well as a good bit of food stuffs etc. that will be used for the meeting this weekend in Siavonga. The truck is to move the pipes and other supplies. On the way back to Siavonga we will deposit the pipes and such in several places where they will be safe and we will find them when we begin working on the wells on Tuesday. Tomorrow I will be up and 0500 and ready to leave by 0600.

October 5

Up early to begin the journey. I really do not like Lusaka. Let me rephrase that, I really do not like driving in Lusaka! Supplies for the weekend lectureship will be purchased and all of the well repair equipment. Tomorrow we will begin repairs. Our goal is to repair/refurbish 7 wells.



We have been purchasing from this company. They are Chinese. They are not friendly and even though they employ them, I do not think that they really like Zambians. But they have everything we need and they are located on the road going out of Lusaka toward Siavonga so that is a plus for us. Their prices seem within reason.

By the end of the day we have pretty much filled the truck with supplies and some in the back of the pickup. I wanted to get back long before dark because we have to find the head men's places to leave the supplies for the wells. Alas, that does not happen. It is after 4pm when we finally start moving toward Siavonga. It is 200km from Lusaka to Siavonga.



The trip down is without difficulty (always the preferred way). We are finding the places to put the pipes and such. We are also finding that people are anxiously waiting for us to arrive.



The next couple of days will be really busy running back and forth. We hope to do several wells at the same time. There are 4 grouped in one area and three in another. Ideally we would like to finish in 2 days.

Mushali kabotu!
Charles
Siavonga, Zambia