



# Under the Baobab Tree

7<sup>th</sup> December, 2011

## Hello

Thank you to many of you who have contacted me assuring of your prayers.

I leave for Australia in two weeks and have a doctor's appointment in Sydney on 11<sup>th</sup> January. I would appreciate your prayers for surgery to follow soon after as doctors want me to remain in Australia for up to 6 months to ensure I am fully recovered.

I am well but need surgery as tests show cells that are precancerous. Because of this and also my family history surgery is needed to prevent development and spread. Initially I was shocked and very sad at the thought of having to leave Africa. However, having gained more information I now anticipate returning to Malawi mid 2012.

## Zambia revisited

On Friday Mama Dave and I returned from a three week trip to Zambia to visit Fiwale Hill Mission Rural Health Centre where I had nursed in the 1980s. I enjoyed the opportunity to catch up with many friends I had not seen for a long time. One of those is Senior Chief Mushili who I knew in the 1980s as Toily Lwebesha, a medical dresser at the health centre. A couple of women told me I had delivered their babies.

Because of change in government policy the health centre now has no inpatients other than occasional patients who need to be under observation.

In the first two weeks Mama Dave and I taught four of our sessions to 3 groups near Kabwe and at Fiwale Hill. We used interpreters and had a song and the captions on the pictures translated into ci Lamba. We also showed people how to

build fuel efficient stoves from mud bricks. However, we had to reduce the number of bricks because Zambian bricks are much bigger than their Malawian counterparts. We were encouraged to see how well the health education was appreciated.

## Sightseeing in Zimbabwe

My friend Angela joined us on our way back to Malawi and we detoured via Victoria Falls and Great Zimbabwe to see the sights. We were fascinated by Great Zimbabwe – the granite buildings and walls are the remains of a people that lived there from the 1400s to 1700s. Although the stones in the dry stone walls seemed of a regular size and shape they had been broken by the traditional method of heating the rock and suddenly cooling it. It is a place I would like to visit again.

There were many new experiences for Mama Dave who had never been out of Malawi before. She found it baffling that the sun seemed to set in a different direction than in Mangochi. As she looked at the majestic Victoria Falls she asked “did the government build that?” When we arrived in Malawi, Mama Dave told me her family was just going to have to sit silently and listen for three days while she told them all she had seen and experienced.

We travelled long distances on mostly good roads. However, driving at night can be nerve racking as some vehicles have no lights or reflectors. On the first day we entered Zambia we were running late and needed to travel a couple of hours in the dark. We were following Keith Gallagher and at one stage I lost sight of his tail lights and noticed we were entering a



cloud of smoke. Then I realised there was a solid mass ahead – an unlit truck! Almost every day travelling we saw one to three smashed semi trailers that had jack knifed by the road after the drivers had lost control of the vehicle. On our last day when we were travelling from Harare through Mozambique to Blantyre we passed *eight* smashed semi trailers! As we edged past one we were surprised to see that it had recently crashed into a crowded bus. The passengers were sitting by the road.

We are very grateful to complete the long journey in safety

## Leave on the light

I am spending the last two weeks in Malawi sorting and packing my belongings and finishing last minute tasks. We plan to visit one last group next week.

While I am away Mama Dave will travel once a month with people visiting the literacy classes to encourage our groups.

Thank you for your support, encouragement and prayers

## Please pray:

1. Praise God for the opportunity to visit friends in Zambia whom I hadn't seen for a very long time.
2. Praise God that Steve and Glenda are in Malawi again after their work visa was granted. Pray for them as they settle in
3. that the groups we have taught will continue to teach others.
4. for Mama Dave and her family
5. that my medical appointments and surgery and recovery will happen in good time
6. that Tim and Mel and family will soon rejoin Team Malawi
7. that Debbie and Arthur will be able to join the team in early 2012

Blessings,

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