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Dear Friend,

Life continues to move on here and I continue to have many interesting and exciting first time experiences.

Here's the short-take on what's been going on:

- We took our Zambian co-workers and their families on a retreat to the Zambezi River this past weekend. For many it was the very first time they had ever seen the Zambezi or so much wildlife up close.
- Olivia, the friend I told you about last month, lost her mother about 4 weeks ago after a sudden stroke. I had my first experience with a Zambian funeral. Please pray for her as she continues to work through her grief and her new faith in God.
- I will be having my very first visitor from home!! Elinor M. is a friend from my home church in Tucson. She will be arriving on this Saturday and will be here for 5 weeks helping us with some accounting needs in our office.

The long-take on what's been going on:

On August 15 and 16 we took our Zambian co-workers and their families on a mini-retreat to the Zambezi River. This was such a treat for them. Travel is terribly expensive here. So when most Zambians travel it is to visit family, almost never is it to a vacation spot.



On Saturday morning, Susi and Ernst and I showed up in our casual clothes and sandals since we were headed to a camping lodge. But because this was a special event for our co-workers, they all showed up in their best clothes. And they looked sharp!! Even the children were spotless and looked marvelous. Twenty-two adults and children and all of our luggage piled into 3 SUVs and took off. About half-way

there, one of the cars broke down. So Ernst took two of the men with him and limped the car back toward Lusaka. So now we had 19 people in the remaining two cars. Yay! Cozy!! We headed on down to the lodge. (The other three men eventually caught up with us in another vehicle.)

What joy it was to share in their first-time experience of seeing the river! They just stood on the bank in awe for quite some time. Susi brought along several

bathing suits for the men and the children (women wouldn't go swimming here if there are men around). Most of the children did get in the water with bright orange water wings and had a delightful time splashing around.

Later in the afternoon we surprised them with a 2-hour boat ride on the Zambezi. Another first for most of them. Oh, the wildlife we saw!! It was simply magnificent. We saw hippos galore, crocodiles, birds of many varieties, and of course, elephants. We sat about 20 feet from several elephants that were eating the grasses and trees in the shallows of the river. The adults enjoyed themselves as much as the children did!



After supper, we sat on the banks of the river next to a fire and enjoyed the starry evening. Ernst, also a former teacher, was able to give an astronomy lesson and pointed out some of the major constellations. We listened to the hippos snorting in the river and frogs croaking on the banks. Aah!

On Sunday morning, after a devotional and some singing, we took everyone to another nearby river with a pontoon. This was another first for most of them. Many had never even seen a pontoon, let alone crossed a river on one. Each time as we wanted to cross, a car came along which meant that we could join the crossing.

After a jam-packed weekend, we got everyone home just around dark. What a blessing it was to be a part of that!

In my last prayer letter I told you about Olivia and her new-found faith in Jesus Christ. Shortly after my last letter, Olivia's mother went into the hospital with complications from diabetes, high blood pressure, and severe malaria. While being treated in the clinic, she suffered a massive stroke and never recovered. She was moved to the University Teaching Hospital and died there about a week later.

In Zambia (and through most of Africa) the funeral is the time between the death of a person and the burial. The funeral house is where all the mourners gather until it is time for the burial. In this instance, the funeral house was Olivia's mother's house since it was the most central location. Many, many people gather there to pay their respects. It is customary for the family to provide food and drinks for all of the mourners, some of whom stay for the entire funeral. Various choirs also arrive to sing appropriate songs. They must also be paid. The whole thing can become quite a costly affair.

I wasn't sure what to expect since this would be my first African funeral experience. There were many people around the house and even more inside the house. All the living room furniture had been moved outside into the yard to provide more seating area for the mourners. In the living room, I found a lot of mattresses on the floor and about 30 women jammed into the little space. Mostly they were talking quietly with each other or just sitting there. Everyone who came and went made sure to greet the members of the family with a handshake and some kind words. Often, they'd put a little money in their hands as well to help with the cost of it all.

It has been about two weeks since the burial and the last guests have finally left. Olivia has been staying at her mother's house this entire time providing for the guests. Please pray for Olivia and her family as they continue to grieve the loss of her mother.

I will be having my first visitor from home! Elinor M. is a friend from my home church (CDO Baptist) in Tucson. We served together on our mission team at CDO. She is also an accountant and will be helping us out with some accounting issues here at Flying Mission Zambia. She is arriving on Saturday and will be here until October 1. I am so very excited that she will be staying with me and will be working with us during that time. I'm already planning weekend activities for the two of us. This visit will give me opportunity to see more of this beautiful country where I live!

I do hope that you are doing well. Your emails, Face Book notes and other messages are such a joy to me. Your prayers and support are such an encouragement to me. Thank you so much for being a part of this team.

Privileged to serve,
Gabriele