

Hello friends!

Thank you so much for your interest and support for my trip to Zambia this past month! This was my second time making this trip, and it was both successful and rewarding. I'm so very grateful for your help in making it possible. The trip was fully funded, and I had enough to take a gift for Paul & Lori to more-than-cover their expenses of hosting me for the time I was there.



As you know, I was tasked with teaching the Old Testament Historical Books to the new freshman class at the Bible College. Most of the students hadn't read those books, and the condensed nature of the course prohibited much outside reading. So our method was to read the texts together, and then allow for questions. I would also offer comment as to interpretive issues and theological themes running through the literature as we went. This format limits the breadth of what is usually covered in an equivalent course, but it has the benefit of making the focus just the biblical text itself. There is no shortcut or substitute for reading God's word, and everyone found it a rich experience to read straight through so much of God's word in such a short time frame. It really allows for theological themes to develop and stand out. It is also very conducive to learning how to read biblical narrative.

One highlight was our afternoon session on Tuesday, just before the exam on Wed. We were just about to begin class when we were all called away to fight a grass fire that was threatening some of the campus. After that was all put down without any damage or injury we returned to cover the book of Esther in one sitting. Covering the entire book that afternoon allowed for the full message of the inspired author to shine through. It was really fun to see them experience the full impact of the story's drama and reversal of fortunes all in one sitting, as it was intended to be read. At the point in the text where the reversal begins and Haman enters into the King's chamber when he intends to honor Mordecai, several students actually began to laugh out loud.

I also assigned them a modest research/writing project. They were allowed to choose any topic related to our course, and it was really a joy to see them make good use of the library that many of you helped to create. The temporary library that Paul has set up was in use every evening for both the resources there, and as a place to study. It will really be exciting to see the permanent structure in use when it is completed.

Many of you know Paul & Lori Schlick, from Grand Island, who moved to Zambia to head up the construction work one year ago. They are both doing well and have done a great job with the task in front of them. Paul's progress is evident all over campus. Lori has been leading a women's bible study with about 30 women from the surrounding area coming to attend. Together they have found themselves in the role of adoptive parents to many of the students, and both of them have done a great job of respecting the local culture while still suggesting new possibilities. They both ask for prayer in maintaining this difficult balance.

An added bonus for this year's trip was that I was able to travel with Matt Whitman. We both had several items for our courses and gifts for Paul and Lori Schlick, and we were very grateful to not have any trouble with luggage, or connections at any point. It was also fun to share the travel experience with someone. Our layover in Addis Ababa, Ethiopia provided a fascinating cross section of Western, African and Middle-Eastern travelers.

On our way home, Matt and I scheduled a few days layover to take in some historical sites, on our own expense. In Athens, we visited Mars Hill, where the Apostle Paul addressed the city's leading thinkers of the day, as recorded in Acts 17. From there, we walked up to the Acropolis where we fell into a conversation with other English speaking tourists and were able to share a vision of Christ's Kingdom, and why Christianity is truly unique among the world's religions. The juxtaposition of those two events in such important places in the story of Western Civilization was a very gratifying moment for both of us.

The entire trip was exhausting, but well worth it. I'm very grateful for the opportunity to teach and be a part of the exciting work that is going on at the college in Zambia. Thanks so much for your generosity to help make it possible.

Aron Utecht