

He makes me lie down in green pastures; He restores my soul.

*We are in the midst of green pastures, puddles, and plentiful rain. The days are peaceful out here on the farm, albeit well-occupied in preparations for busier times to come. All the things we've been saving to do "on a rainy day" have no excuse now. My house is cleaner than it's ever been, and Jim is repairing all the broken whatever's that have been just getting by. When God makes us "lie down" in green pastures, there is more time for study, writing, Tonga, prayer, praise, and thinking. We've had some excellent planning sessions for the **family conference**, as well as provisions for it. Our long-time friends, **Mike and Mandy Neilson** –South Africans who minister in Johannesburg- will be coming as keynote speaker and workshop leaders. Zambian friends from **Navigators** will be partnering with us to run the children's sessions. Praise the Lord! This is going to be a very critical conference, addressing pertinent family issues in Zambia. **Please pray for well-prepared ears, hearts and lessons.***

Lying in the pasture seems too quiet to be productive. Yet, this is a time when we are seeing the results from the labors of prayer –yours and ours . The church is beginning to wake up and to rise up. We had seventeen on Saturday's workday. I joined the women in the maize field the church planted, and Jim joined the men, building a wall between the classrooms. Sunday, the attendance was again up, as some of the "ho-hummers" for whom we've been praying returned. The response to the Scriptures was evident. Two Sundays in a row, we've had spontaneous testimonies of what God is doing as some of the women learn to trust Him with their meager resources and hardships. It's been thrilling! Bible studies are well attended, and interaction is growing. Teens and women are memorizing John 14. The Shepherd is working with the sheep, and we are happily admiring Him. Praise Him too!

*Three weeks ago, Jim and Arthur met **Chris** on visitation. He was a dusty looking man, dreadlocks, saggy jeans, soft face, questioning eyes. He is a very intelligent thirty-year old who'd been taught by a missionary who came to high school to teach the Religious Education classes. Apparently she grounded him well in the truth, but he never processed the "facts" into a life-response. He has questions –good questions, hard questions—and is searching. He meets with Jim and Arthur for a Bible study, and actually does the lesson ahead. Last week, he showed up to the study having shaved off his locks. Arthur asked him why he did it. "Well, I didn't think I would be welcomed at a church if I didn't." Arthur told him, "We never said anything about your hair. Man does look on the outside, but God is looking at your heart..." Chris attended another church last Sunday, but continues to study with Jim and Arthur. Pray for the eyes of Chris' heart to be opened, for the questions in his eyes to turn to understanding. We ask the same for the couple we mentioned in the last update –**Gibson and Astrida.***

While we are "pasteurizing" in prayer, if you have some quiet-winter moments, we'd appreciate prayer for the bush works at Kaponde and the new village of Kakuse. Please pray they will be faithful in our absence and for their leadership needs. We'd like to bring in a trained, village pastor to shepherd these works year-round, rather than to stunt the progress by our unavailability. (The roads are currently swamps.) There is a Bible school in Livingstone that may be able to feed us a Tonga man. Please pray for Arthur as well. He is chomping at the bit to get

out there. Next week, though, he will be heading north to Central African Baptist College for a block class on Hermeneutical Survey of the New Testament. Pray he'll be challenged and renewed.

When God restores our souls, praise comes out more frequently—at least it is for us. Three weeks ago, after receiving our financial statement, I was praising God at testimony time for the surprise He gave us this Christmas. Many close friends and churches gave above and beyond their monthly commitments. We were so blessed it was impossible to keep quiet about it, and to share with the church that we have decided to build there among them. Spontaneously, the church burst into applause! I told the people how God did this, and the applause just continued unrestrained. We thank you so much for doing this, and just wanted to let you know that GOD has received the applause. We know you want it this way. We have drawn up plans for a modest house/office. A well is being dug by hand right now, so that when the maize is harvested, we will pour the foundation and begin laying up the walls. Glenn Fawcett will be here, Lord willing, late April/early May. We will also be needing **a container** to store tools and belongings on site. Will you join us in asking God for one?

Last, but not LEAST, we forwarded Megan and Dave's birth announcement three weeks ago for Selah Michelle, pictures included. For some reason, the newsgroup did NOT send this on. Selah was born January 2nd, on her Aunt Mary's birthday. Her name means "to pause and reflect on the gift of God." We're praising the Lord for another Grand example of God's handiwork. She's beautiful!

Thank you for the way you partner with us. More and more we see the effectiveness of your care and your prayerful involvement. In these green moments, we aren't just watching grass and puddles grow. WE ourselves are growing—in vision and physical strength for the faster paced months ahead.

Gratefully restored,
Jim and Rachel

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