

MONTHLY MAIL REPORT

March 2021

I guess we are all learning to live with uncertainty. Alison and I were booked to fly out from Ndola Airport on 19 February, but even with tickets purchased and all arrangements made, nothing seemed certain. My own response was one of anxiety, particularly over getting the COVID negative test result required by the airline before boarding, and whether or not they would be dated correctly within 72 hours of flying. Well, we were negative, we got the result certificates, the date was correct and we boarded.

Now, if you have travelled internationally, you will know that what follows tends to become a blur ... 5 hours in Lusaka, 7 hours to Dubai, 8 hours on the ground, then 17 hours to Auckland. New Zealand puts all passengers into Managed Isolation Quarantine (MIQ) upon arrival for two weeks, so, as I write we are enjoying 5-star luxury on the 11th floor of a downtown hotel, courtesy of the NZ Government. I am referring to it as 'Magnificent Isolation Quarantine'. Nothing had seemed certain before leaving Zambia, but all went according to plan, and we are thankful.

We are thankful too, that at the last minute good friends asked to use our house in Zambia for 6 months, so it has not been left empty. Covid-19 remains a con-



cern, with increasing infection rates, and no date having yet been set for a vaccination programme in Zambia.

Our 2020 Head Boy Mabvuto Phiri scored so highly in the December ECZ Grade 9 exams that he has been offered a boarding place at the prestigious Chiwala Boys School in Ndola. His father cannot afford the fees, so Mabvuto becomes eligible for assistance from our Onesimus Fund, set up by trustee Rob Bellingham in 2012 specifically to help promising young students with their secondary or tertiary fees. Since then five students have been grateful recipients. Patricia Mwenda of Baluba, who is a member of the Kafakumba Singers is also a candidate for the Onesimus Fund, as she has been accepted to study medicine in Lusaka. Please consider donating to this increasingly important fund.

While in New Zealand we will try to meet up with as many friends of Limapela as possible. Some of you have become wonderful ambassadors — thank you so much! On a personal level, over the next 6 months Alison and I need to spend time with family members and get our house in order ready for eventual retirement when the time comes.

—Matthew and Alison Raymond



It was harder getting away from Zambia this time because our leave is to be longer than usual — tasks to be delegated, money to be organized and systems to be better organized. But we have good staff members and very competent administrative people, so I am confident that everything will be well looked after while we are away. It was gratifying to see the pupils arriving back at school in their fresh uniforms and colourful *chitenge* face masks, and to see the results of building and maintenance improvements at Limapela Cedric's as we left.