

Free Grace Evangelistic Association

(Mark 16. 15, 2 Timothy 2. 2, James 1. 27)

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Conference venue at “La Rose de Saron” Church in Lubumbashi

Report on the visit to Dem Rep Congo (Katanga) and Zambia by the FGEA Chairman – April/May 2014

Dear Members, Sponsors and Friends,

On 28 April I left Britain for Lubumbashi in the Democratic Republic of the Congo, flying via Addis Ababa. The city of Lubumbashi is not a familiar one to us in Britain. Lubumbashi is the capital of Katanga province in the south of the Democratic Republic of the Congo, which is largely autonomous and has close economic links to Zambia. The so-called “Copperbelt” straddles both Katanga and Zambia, where there are large industrial copper and other metal mining and processing plants. Whilst Katanga has not been badly affected by the Congolese civil war, it is not a place for the casual visitor !

Over the previous four months, both I and African brethren have faced many unforeseen problems and challenges, such that I seriously wondered whether the visit could go ahead. However, in answer to prayer and submission to the will of God, the way was eventually opened. Indeed “we wrestle not against flesh and blood, but against principalities, against powers, against the rulers of the darkness of this world, against spiritual wickedness in high places.” Yet our glorious hope is that Christ has risen “far above all principality and power.” (Ephesians 6.12 and 1.21) The challenges included problems obtaining the local official documentation for my visa and security threats in Congo near the border crossing into Zambia at Kasumbalesa. Since February there has been a series of fatal shootings of foreigners at Kasumbalesa, such that Zambia even threatened closure of the border crossing. We thus had to venture in faith, knowing that I and the Zambian brethren had to pass through Kasumbalesa ourselves.

I arrived at Lubumbashi airport on 29 April carrying over 300 French booklets, 10 French Martin New Testaments and a small number of English KJV Bibles and booklets from TBS. This airport is definitely not for the faint hearted traveller ! I silently prayed that the Lord would preserve me. After passing through immigration and checks for a Yellow Fever certificate, I was then in a small but very chaotic baggage hall, with a lot of noise and shouting. Many of those present did not appear to be passengers. I was immediately approached by a man with some form of identification, asking to see my baggage receipts and asked me what I was doing in Congo. I said that I was a minister visiting for preaching and distributing books/scriptures. He led me to the baggage carousel, where my first case was just appearing. I saw that there was almost a fight over other baggage as it was being loaded onto the carousel. Then my second case arrived, he took charge of it, then led me to Customs, telling them who I was. They let me straight through without any question, despite the high customs value of the books I was carrying. Then I was led through several more checks, and out into the open. This man was evidently a porter who expected some payment, but he had been provided by God to spare me from potentially serious difficulties in an unknown place. At that moment my Zambian friend (and regional Director for FGEA), Duwen Musaka, came up with Congolese brethren to receive me. The porter was paid appropriately and also given a copy of “Love of God” in French. They said to me that this porter was “a good man”.

The Zambian friends had travelled the previous day through Kasumbalesa to Lubumbashi with 1200 French books (“Love of God” and “Authority of God” specially printed in Zambia), 75 Kiluba Bibles and 100 French TBS booklets “Lord Gave the Word”. 80 Swahili Bibles were also purchased in Lubumbashi. Given the quantity of literature, carrying this from Zambia on buses was quite a feat. The photo on the right shows the literature and Bibles just after their arrival.



I was lodged in the “Hôtel Belle Vue” in central Lubumbashi. This was a comfortable and functional hotel, but more importantly a secure place where I could stay. Outside the door was a very tall and strong man in military style combat uniform, wearing dark glasses, a grim face and carrying a large truncheon. No loiterers troubled us outside this hotel !

The church that invited us was a branch of an African denomination, named in English “Rose of Sharon”, or in French “Rose de Saron”. They were holding a 3-4 day conference, at which I and Duwen Musaka were to speak on behalf of FGEA for two days on the subject “The Word of God, a good foundation”, speaking of Christ the eternal Word in union with the written Word (Bible), then warning about unfaithfulness and the error brought in through corrupt Bible versions. I also emphasised the union of Father, Word and Holy Ghost (1 John 5.7), so that the Holy Ghost can never teach contrary to God’s Word. Each adult present received detailed notes in French, of which 200 copies had been printed in the UK; these gave a summary of the teaching from the Bible and detail about the principles of translating and copying God’s Word. I especially covered French Bible versions, giving a warning about the commonly used versions (e.g. Segond or its variants), and providing advice on how to proceed given the near unavailability of sound versions (e.g. David Martin). The notes allowed everyone to see detailed comparisons of key texts between the David Martin, Segond and “Bible en Français Courant” (“Good News” version in French), that show how Segond and others have systematically attacked the messianic prophecies in the Old Testament, and the doctrines of the virgin birth, the deity of Christ and the Trinity in the New Testament. The ministers were particularly struck when I showed that the name of the hosting church “La Rose de Saron” (Song of Solomon 2.1 - the rose of Sharon is Christ) was faithfully present in the French Martin version. However, in Segond this has been removed and replaced with “un narcisse de Saron” (a narcissus of Sharon). In “Bible en Français Courant” it is indicated that this is the church speaking, not Christ, and Segond 21 indicates that the Song of Solomon is simply a conversation between “le jeune homme” (the young man) and a “la jeune fille” (the young woman); the sense of the holy conversation between Christ and the Church being totally suppressed.

The church “building” was only made out of plastic sheeting with some metal sheets for the roof (see photos on page 1 and on the right). It was located in the “Bongonga” quarter of the city, which is a very poor densely crowded area with no sanitation. Despite this and the sweltering heat, it was a privilege in



the sight of God to speak and teach in such a place and to distribute literature and Bibles that they otherwise could not possibly have obtained. There were a number of ministers present, along with many men, women and



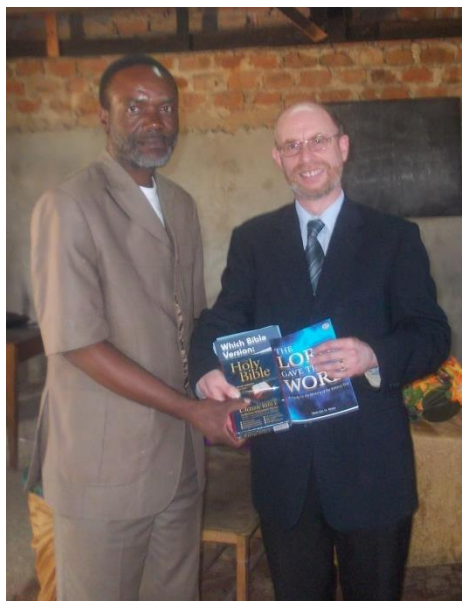
children. A number of ministers spoke with especial warmth about our work, and they were very concerned about the issues we were raising about Bible versions and

the need for faithfulness in the churches. I emphasised the need for each one present to take away and prayerfully study these things, searching the scriptures whether these things be so. Much of the literature was left in the hands of our contact and host in Lubumbashi, Pasteur Jean Monga, for later distribution to other churches. I am very grateful to Pasteur Monga, my interpreter and many others for their faithfulness and labours over this visit. I was assisted in speaking by an interpreter who spoke English, French and Swahili. Often local people speak a mixture of French and Swahili, with some words also of English origin; but they can all read French.

On Friday 2 May, Duwen Musaka and I left Lubumbashi early in the morning in a taxi on the 60 mile journey to the Kasumbalesa border crossing, praying for the Lord’s safe conduct. We arrived safely at the border, to be met by a noisy crowd of would-be porters, two of whom secured carriage of our cases. We thought it best to let them do this. After some delay whilst various people closely examined my passport and visa, it was finally stamped and we then went to an office at the actual border where about 6 uniformed men were sitting, one of whom had a large wad of bank notes in his hand on open display. We handed over our stamped passports, whilst the man with the bank notes indicated he wanted a payment. Duwen and I took no notice, apart from Duwen who handed him a copy of “Authority of God” in French. The man then started looking at the book contents, rather than ruffling his wad of bank notes. Our passports were handed back and we walked away to the Zambian border post. However, on the Zambian side I was

told that my visa was invalid, and that I must pay for a new entry visa. I politely challenged the feeble reason given for it being invalid; after which the man took away my passport to show it to a more senior officer. A few minutes later he returned, stamped my passport and we were free to go on our way.

At the border we were met by our hosting ministers from the Zambian city of Ndola, who had driven 95 miles to meet us. We reached Ndola just in time for a quick meal before the FGEA(Zambia) conference at Ndola began at 2 pm.



This covered much the same subjects as that in Lubumbashi, but was conducted in English with a Bemba interpreter. Here we had KJV Bibles to distribute to all at the end of the conference on Saturday afternoon. It is a great God-given privilege and gift that we should be able to read and give to others so faithful and spiritual translation as that of the KJV in English: but such versions are not so readily obtained in many other languages. Duwen Musaka explained about the weakness and errors in many of the African local language Bibles. Apart from being in places a poor translation of an English corrupted version, the African versions have their own peculiar errors. In John 3.16, instead of “For God so loved the world, that he gave his only begotten Son...”, many native African language versions read “... he gave his only begotten child ...”

At this point in the visit, I became aware from various sources that Africa is being greatly troubled by an explosion of “prophets” and other errors that can only be described as witchcraft being practised by supposed “ministers” of the Gospel. We were told first-hand of a woman who could not have children.

Instead of going to her pastor for scriptural counsel, she consulted a “prophet”

who told her to leave her husband and try for a child from another man ! Then from another city we were told of a man with HIV under medical control, who went to a “prophet” for healing. The “prophet” told him to fast for 30 days and take no food or medicine. After 20 days the man’s pastor realised something was seriously wrong and visited him, but the poor man would not listen to his pastor’s plea to take food and medicine. On day 27 of his fast the man died. Then there was a “minister” in Ndola who has been offering brooms for 70 K (~£7) that he had blessed, so that for a period of 7 days they could be used to sweep away the evil spirits in someone’s house ! Otherwise, there were churches administering “holy water”, various types of soils etc. etc... It was remarkable that the subjects we were led by God to speak on before the visit, were very suited as a warning against such satanic practices being performed in supposedly “spirit-filled churches” (indeed this is the work of a spirit, but not the Holy Spirit). Duwen Musaka read out to all Deuteronomy 13 about the Lord’s warning not to follow those who, even if they perform wonders or signs, teach contrary to God’s Word. All participants received copies of “Mystery, Babylon the Great” which had been specially printed in Zambia for the conferences, which warns about the spiritual Babylon and its threat to the church. A number of ministers were encouraged by our message to stand firm against such occult practices, not only here but in our other Zambian meetings.

On Saturday evening we were kindly driven the 110 miles by Duwen’s brother and his wife from Ndola to Kabwe, where I stayed with Duwen’s family. On the Lord’s Day I preached at Duwen’s church on the subject of the “good hand of God” (Nehemiah 2.18), after which we had part of the day to rest following such an exhausting week.

On Monday 5 May we held a two day FGEA(Zambia) conference in Kabwe. The format and literature/Bible distribution was the same as at Ndola, but here the theme was slightly different, being “Teaching the Word of God”. This included the instruction of the young in God’s Word. For this conference we were joined by the FGEA(Zimbabwe) deputy co-ordinator, Norman Kalilombe from Karoi. Norman preached both afternoons at the Kabwe conference.



At Kasosolo village church – Norman Kalilombe is holding two young twins from the congregation.

Norman's message about leaders in the church was particularly searching and challenging. He said that there are only three types of leader: those who appoint themselves (e.g. Dathan, Abiram and Korah who God destroyed – Numbers 16); those who are appointed by men or at the behest of men (e.g. King Saul who feared the people who had called for his appointment – 1 Samuel 8.5, 15.6); and those appointed by God (e.g. King David). Self-appointed men and women are a particular problem in African churches.

The final day of ministering was a visit to a rural church (a branch church of Duwen Musaka's) at Kasosolo. This was 20 miles from Kabwe, but the road was so bad that the journey took well over 2 hours. At various points our car was overtaken by cyclists who could avoid the massive pot holes and ruts in dirt road. Nevertheless, it was a joy to be asked to speak at a village church. I spoke from Acts 17 about the Bereans who searched the Bible daily, and Norman Kalilombe spoke from Luke 5 about the disciples hearing the Word of God and forsaking all to follow Jesus. The church was a simple mud and thatch construction located on the Deacon's farmland. Despite only being 4 years old, there were at least 50 – 60 people, including children, in the church and congregation. The building was completely packed. The photo above shows Norman Kalilombe outside the village church holding two baby twins, who had recently been born; we were asked to pray for the Lord's blessing upon them and the parents, who also had another set of twins !



I especially thank Duwen and Julia Musaka, with whom I stayed for 5 days at Kabwe, for all their work for FGEA; but I must also thank many other members of FGEA(Zambia) who I met, some for the first time. It was also encouraging to see how the Lord has taught and led many in the ways of the truth since my previous visits. Whilst in Kabwe I was introduced to the printer who has faithfully printed the large quantity of English and French literature we are distributing, printing for FGEA at a very reasonable price and with good quality. He had first heard me preach at Kabwe in 2007, and seeing the work of distributing literature he has willingly helped us and joined as a member of FGEA(Zambia).

On Thursday 8 May we set off early by car, kindly driven by an elder in Duwen's church, the 90 miles to Lusaka airport. I was carrying back to the UK over 600 copies of "Authority of God" in French that had been printed in Kabwe, for later distribution in other parts of Congo, Burundi and Tanzania (God willing). However, my calculations of my baggage weight were not accurate, so I had the embarrassment of repacking by bags and hand-luggage at the check-in desk by trying to move as many books into my hand-baggage as possible. However, though God's providence all the books were carried without extra charge and were brought safely back to the UK awaiting later despatch.

I left Lusaka airport for London, flying via Harare and Addis Ababa. After the 27 hour journey home, I can record God's faithfulness in both preserving myself and the African brethren in health, but also in watching over our families.

I would conclude by thanking all those who have supported this visit, both locally in Congo, Zambia and in the UK through prayer, practical help, donations or grants.

With warm Christian regards,

Ian Sadler

Chairman: Free Grace Evangelistic Association

