

Back to Africa Part 3 - The Felgenhauer's in Zambia



This week's post is written by Kathryn (nee Ulhorn) Felgenhauer, whose husband Stefan is the new Operations Manager for One Africa Team.

My husband and I visited the continent of Africa for the very first time 20 years ago. Four years later, we moved here for our first tour of duty. Most of the missionary

families currently living in Africa have lived there for more than two decades. They hardly consider their overseas service as “foreign” anymore. Their lives tell the story of WELS mission work in Africa.

Our family has a unique perspective. We have transitioned back and forth between North American culture and African culture several times. We have a well-rounded view of both Developed Countries and Developing Countries. The readjustments we’ve made have been a trial, but they have also give us valuable insight into both worlds.

So now we’ve been here in Zambia for just over a week. What are we thinking? What are we feeling? And how is the adjustment going this time?



The Felgenhauer family back in Africa
(Zambia)

First impressions can be useful tools. Stefan and I find it interesting that in our time of moving between cultures we have short-lived first impressions upon returning to a place we used to live. It's fascinating to take note of those first impressions, before our previous experience takes over and we settle into our routine once again. I keenly remember my first impressions when we moved to Africa the second time. Even though we had lived six years in Africa and still had keen memories of that time stuck in our minds, we had forgotten about the challenges of day to day living in a developing country.

In general, the first impressions we have had this time are of moving to a somewhat familiar African country (Zambia) but also the added dimension of leaving our oldest child back “home” for schooling. Listen to what each member of our family has taken notice of thus far...

Anna (age 12 - born in Malawi): I was looking forward to seeing the Seminary campus because we never lived close to any of those before. It's different than I thought but I was amazed at how big it was and happy to see the kids there. I can't wait to get my bike so I can ride it there. A lot of things seem the same, like the gates on doors and the geckos and skinks on the walls, but I forgot how hot it is. I'm looking forward to visiting Malawi and seeing some of my friends. It's fun to order Fanta at restaurants again and hopefully soon we can go swimming somewhere.



Benjamin and Anna

Benjamin (age 14 - born in Malawi, will return to the USA for school in 10 months): Africa is like I remember it, but Zambia is a bit more modern (than Malawi) with a lot more shopping centers. I was looking forward to being outside and barefoot and I am doing that again. It's really dusty though. Being in Africa feels like being back home. It's kinda hard getting used to slower Internet. I look forward to finding soft drinks in glass bottles like I remember and visiting game parks to see the animals. It seems weird to think that the next 10 months will be the longest amount of time I spend here.

Louisa (age 16 – born in Germany, attending high school stateside) – I am loving all the photos they've sent mostly of foods I remember, such as Blackcat peanut butter and Parmalat yoghurt and the mango juice. I was happy to see some jacaranda flowers. Finding time to facetime my family when it is still daylight so I can see outside has been tricky with a 7-hour time difference and I can't talk to them during my evening because they are sleeping. I can't wait to visit at Christmas.

Kathy (not as young as I once was – born in the USA): As the plane was descending I saw purple jacaranda trees, and exiting the plane we saw bright flame trees. That alone put a smile on my face. Climbing into a car for the first time again was an odd feeling, sitting in the passenger seat on the left. It actually made me feel a bit dizzy and I'm a bit nervous about driving again, with the deep ditches on the sides of the roads. I had forgotten how dry and red the earth looks this time of year. The streets seemed less congested on our drive, but the style of the house we are currently staying in was so familiar. Tiled floors throughout, locked gates on doors, a limited water supply in the reserve tanks and candles at the ready for the electricity outages. "I know how to do this", I told myself. The trill and song of the birds that first morning was unbelievable. I knew I had been missing it. It is a new place with much that is familiar. I long to settle into our life, getting our own kitchen items, our own bed, and our own daily routine. That's going to take quite some time yet. It's already been 5 months of transition since Stefan was hired, and it could be several more. I am praying for patience. I keep checking the time to see what Louisa must be doing back in the US. I am so thankful for the technology that lets us keep in touch.



Stefan (a little more grey - born in East Germany): I'm so happy to be back in a warm climate again. I did forget how warm it is this time of year and how dusty everything gets. I knew I was back in Africa when we stepped off the plane and I had to walk quite a ways on foot to get into the airport. The wait to get through immigration tested my German patience. The woodsmoke-filled air is strong too but I do know the rains are coming and that will bring relief. I am enjoying the African scenery and it makes me excited to explore and learn this new area. Visiting the

other countries where One Africa Team is active is a priority for me and one I look forward to. In some ways Zambia is more modern than I would have thought but the Internet is still slower than I got used to in the US. Overall, I am thankful for the opportunity to be here and to serve the Lord in this way. It's the work I love to do. It's good to be back.

The Felgenhauers lived in Malawi from 2002-2008 and from 2012-2015 and are currently based in Lusaka, Zambia.

Please pray for those working in fields that are ripe for harvest. Share their story, engage with future news and receive updates. Go to this link to learn more about our mission fields in Africa and how the Holy Spirit is working faith in people's hearts
<https://wels.net/serving-others/missions/africa>