

Be Patient Until School Starts



The Class of '23 had to wait several months before starting classes at the Lutheran Seminary in Lusaka, Zambia

“Therefore, brothers, be patient until the coming of the Lord” (James 5:7a EHV). This is a timely section of Scripture for us all but especially for those of us involved in worker training. Back in March of 2020 most all of us throughout the world were beginning to experience the different challenges of the COVID 19 pandemic. At the Seminary here in Lusaka, Zambia and at the Lutheran Bible Institute (LBI) in Lilongwe, Malawi it meant the closure of our two worker training schools. They work closely together in training up future pastors for the Lutheran Church of Central Africa (LCCA). Little did we realize that for all the challenges the closure of the schools would bring, trying to open up our LBI and Seminary would bring even more.

James in his Epistle uses two analogies to explain what it means to be patient. One analogy is that of the farmer. “See how the farmer waits for the valuable harvest from the ground, patiently waiting for it, until it receives the early and late rains” (5:7b) A farmer is a good example of patience because he has to work with things that are beyond his control and completely in God’s hands—things like the rain. Already in October the government allowed schools to open. Where the government became strict was in the opening up of its borders. Our LBI and Seminary are made up of about half Zambian students and half Malawian students. This was where we encountered challenges beyond our control as half of our respective student bodies needed to cross borders that were closed. We asked for the help of Pastor Chisankulo who is an LCCA pastor who lives close to the Zambia/Malawi border. He made more than a dozen visits to the respective Malawi and Zambia borders and their offices to try and find out when and how we could get our students across. Most frustrating for him was that the border peoples themselves couldn’t give clear answers. Eventually, Pastor Chisankulo worked out a test run of two brave students and their families closest to the border in the Eastern Province of Zambia to make the trip. It proved successful! We had our first group of students across the border paving the way for five successive groups of students and families from Zambia and Malawi to make the crossing.



The Epistle writer James also uses the Old Testament prophets as exemplars of patient endurance. Many of the pre-LBI students in preparation for going to school had sold everything. In a place where a \$70 COVID 19 test is near a month's wages for the average Zambian, these students were now being asked to live on the margins for the four to six months it took to get them to school. Like those prophets of the Old Testament they were asked to endure for the chance to serve their Lord. How happy they were by mid-December to finally be at their schools to begin that anticipated journey in preparation to become LCCA pastors. What a beautiful lesson in patient endurance for us all as we serve our Lord in whatever way he asks of us!

Missionary Philip Birner lives in Lusaka and is the Acting Principal of the Lutheran Seminary of Lusaka

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