

**GRACE COMMUNION INTERNATIONAL**

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**To:** Chairman, National Ecclesiastical Council of Elders of Malawi  
**Cc:** All elders, GCI Malawi

**From:** Chrissy Mankhomwa **Ref.:**

**Subject:** **REPORT OF MY TRIP TO ZAMBIA** **Date:** May 13, 2011

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I write to inform you that I had a very pleasant trip to Zambia where I went to attend the 2011 National Women's Retreat. The programme was taking place over the Good Friday-Easter period at a place called Chongwe, not very far from Lusaka.

The theme of the 2011 Zambia Women's Retreat was:

"Our Light has come, and the glory of the LORD has risen upon you" (Isaiah 60:1, 2).

I left Malawi on Wednesday, April 20<sup>th</sup>, 2011 and was welcomed in Zambia by Mrs Miriam Musonda. She also provided me with accommodation at her lodge throughout my stay in Zambia.

The Retreat began on Thursday evening, April 21<sup>st</sup>, 2011. Pastor Jackson Banda gave the welcome remarks. The Conference was officially opened on Friday, April 22<sup>nd</sup>, 2011 by the Missions Developer for Africa, Pastor Kalengule Kaoma.

Pastor Kaoma encouraged us to enjoy the blessings that arise when we meet together to worship our great God. He exhorted us to encourage one another in our Christian life since each one of us meets many problems and challenges in our daily lives in our various places. Thus this gathering should serve as a refreshing time of sweet fellowship when we can share our hope in Christ Jesus our Saviour.

Sixty-five women attended the Retreat and they came from all the corners of Zambia. These scattered places were Kitwe in the copperbelt, Chawama, Lilanda, Isoka, Zambia Central (Lusaka), and Chongwe where we were having the Conference. Now Zambia is a very big country when compared with Malawi. And traveling from the rural areas can be quite a challenge. Some of the women took 3 days of travelling to the Conference. The simplicity of the faith of these women was contagious, so vivid. The Retreat was well attended. Only two

church areas were not represented. It is unfortunate that the Zimbabweans failed to come. Mrs Eleanor Mandimika who should have come was involved in an accident with the rest of her family. She was the most hurt in the accident and we were told that she was on clutches. Mrs Beatrice Mpofu who was to replace her also contracted malaria at the last minute making another replacement difficult. Therefore, I ended up being the only international delegate at the Retreat.

The Conference was very well organized. I was fascinated to see that most church areas had women's choirs. We had a wonderful treat on Sunday when we had a general church service. There were several choirs. The women loved to sing to the Lord. Although the programme was fairly long, it was full of excitement. Many people attended. Pastor Jack Banda spoke at the service focusing on the need for our lights to shine not just to blind each other with the brilliance, so to say, but more especially to illuminate those that still walk in darkness. Pastor Kaoma also conducted the breaking of bread service on this day. One church area known as Chawama, pastored by Mr Kalaba, came with a praise team. The team made the whole difference at the Conference, making it lively and pleasant. The Kalaba family is very zealous for the faith. The lady is so active and talented. They are making a positive impact of the Grace Communion International in their area. Actually, everyone made their contribution in one way or the other. (I remember for instance the enthusiasm shown by the women with babies. They worked hard not to miss anything or to cause disturbance. They handled their little ones superbly well.)

There were several speakers who gave very uplifting messages on various topics at the Conference. We were indeed inspired and encouraged to "Rise up and shine in Jesus Christ." The speakers at the Retreat were as follows:

- Mrs Kalaba (Pastor Kalaba's wife – from Chawama);
- Mrs Chipempere (Pastor Chipempere's wife – Central Zambia, Lusaka);
- Dr Mutinta Nyumbu (serves Central Zambia with her husband, Dr Inyambo Nyumbu);
- Mrs K Banda; and
- Mrs Chrissy Mankhomwa (myself)

During the Conference, we received a lot of assistance from Pastor Jack Banda who lives fairly nearby to where we were having the Retreat. He could be called at short notice to attend to administrative issues and to run errands. For instance, some women arrived late in the night on Friday, April 22<sup>nd</sup>, 2011, at a train station in Lusaka and when contacted, Mr Banda went immediately to welcome them and drove them to the conference.

The Retreat ended on Easter Monday, April 25<sup>th</sup>, 2011. I stayed on a little while and returned two days later on Wednesday, April 27<sup>th</sup>, 2011. During these days, I had the opportunity to see Lusaka.

I must say that I enjoyed my trip to Zambia so much. I learnt a lot from what our fellow women in Zambia are doing and it has given me some idea of the state of the church there. I was particularly impressed with the zeal they have for the Lord and the commitment they show. It was evident in the few days I spent with them and was inspired by it.

God's church is indeed vibrant and shining. I thank the church for offering me the opportunity to participate in the Retreat in Zambia. This visit was one of the most memorable highlights of my Christian life.

Finally, let me close by mentioning that Nsama Kaoma, wife of the MD for Africa needs our prayers. She could not stay much with us because of her health condition. She was in high spirits though when she came and encouraged the women to enjoy good fellowship.

Let us continue to remember the words of our President, Dr Joseph Tkach, that prayer is the impregnable battlefield where we wage our battles of faith.

Your sister in Christ,

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