

*They Called Him
Muluti*

*The Life and Times of
Alvin Hobby:
A Teacher in Africa*

by Georgia Hobby

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Publisher's Statement

They called him Muluti, which means “teacher” in Tonga, the language of Zambia. This is the true story of the life of Alvin Hobby, written by his wife Georgia Hobby — and what a story it is! Every Christian would be benefited and blessed by reading the pages that follow. It is difficult for us to imagine how these early missionary pioneers were able to do what they did, but they were strengthened by their love for their Father in heaven and their commitment to take the gospel to those who had not heard it. In going, they used every means at their disposal to complete their mission. The Hobbys made their mark, which is still felt both in Zambia and in their home country of America.

Alvin and Georgia spent more than 40 years in the mission field of Africa. Making their home in Zambia, they reared a family in that setting, while brother Hobby taught in the schools, worked as a registered nurse in the school's clinic, translated the scriptures into the local dialect, and served in many other capacities. Sister Hobby also played a great role in these efforts as wife, mother, and a servant of God in her own right. Literally, they were a team that followed the Lord faithfully and, in so doing, they gained the respect of those with whom they worked in Africa, and of the Lord's people back home.

During one period, the Hobbys stayed in their host country for more than 10 years before coming home, which may seem extreme to readers who hear these days, primarily of “campaign trips” of two or three weeks' duration. The reason for the Hobbys extended stay was that their children were in school, in session timings which were opposite of those in the States, so they put the children's education before their desires to return home on furlough. Because of their dedication, George Benson

thought so much of them that he took an active role in promoting their work.

During their years in Zambia, the Hobbys were associated with such missionaries as Dow and Alice Merritt, Myrtle Rowe, Orville and Augusta Brittell, Leonard Bailey, and many others. They lived in Zambia under primitive conditions and hard times, in comparison to the present-day setting.

Brother Hobby departed this world in 1997 but he lives on through the memories of his wife, their children and grandchildren, and all of those he influenced during his lifetime, especially souls in Zambia. We thank God for brother Hobby and his family, and for a lifetime of work in spreading the Gospel of Christ.

Sister Hobby now lives in Searcy, Arkansas. We pray that the Lord will continue to be with her and to care for her needs.

J. C. Choate
Winona, MS
August 23, 2000

“Those who are wise will shine like the brightness of the heavens, and those who lead many to righteousness, like the stars for ever and ever”

(Daniel 12:3).

Dedicated to the memory of
Jacobo Sibbili
and
Sikakele Mulamfu
Men of great wisdom
African brothers in the Faith
Educators who worked along with Alvin
throughout his years in Africa.

For the beauty of Africa
does not lie
in its wildness
or its brilliant sunsets,
attractive as these are,
but in the lives, like those of
Jacobo Sibbili and Sikakele Mulamfu
which have been made beautiful by God's Word

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Acknowledgements

Although this book is the story of the life of one man, the story would not have been possible without the work of those pioneers who paved the way in Northern and Southern Rhodesia:

Some African Evangelists Before 1940

George Kosa (1907)

Peter Masiya (1912)

Jack Mazila (1916)

Bulawayo Kukana

Daniel Shandavu

Kamboli (1923)

Peter Mukuni

Bicycle Sianjina

There are many others, for Africans do not keep the Good News to themselves.

Some Missionaries to the Rhodesias Before 1940

John and Emma Sherriff (from New Zealand) (1897)

F. L. Hadfield and his wife (from New Zealand) (1906)

William N. and Delia Short (1921)

Ray and Zelma Lawyer (1926)

DeWitt and Dolly Garrett

W. L. and Addie Brown (1929)

Dow and Alice Merritt (1926)

George and Otis Scott (1927)

Alva B. and Margaret Reese (1929)

Alvin and Georgia Hobby (1938)

Myrtle Rowe (1938)

Orville and Augusta Brittell (1938)

Leonard Bailey (from England) (1938)



John and Emma Sherriff

J. C. and Joyce Shewmaker (1939)

Helen Pearl Scott who arrived in 1927 and married Dow Merritt in 1942.

Thanks to:

Those missionaries older than ourselves who were our mentors, advisors and co-workers.

George S. Benson, who worked over a period of years to provide financial help to the missionaries, and to provide money for building projects.

F. E. and Bertha Hayes, sister and brother-in-law of George S. Benson, who acted as treasurer, collecting contributions from churches and forwarding them to Alvin over a period of fifteen years (1947-1962).

Dr. Annabel Green and Mr. Jimmy Jones, both of Searcy, Arkansas. Your encouragement, suggestions for improvement, and editing were invaluable.

The children of Alvin and Georgia Hobby and their spouses: David and Karen Hershey Hobby, George and Priscilla Baker Hobby, Dennis and Anita Hobby Mitchell, Kenneth and Ann Adair Hobby. Your recollection of events and your suggestions for improvements have made this story a family project.

Introduction

They Called Him “Muluti”

The teacher, Alvin Hobby, was teaching his students the parts of the body in English.

“Muluti?”

“Yes, Moses.”

“Muluti, what is this?”

“That’s a shirt, Moses.”

“No, no, Muluti.....this!”

“That’s called a belt.”

Moses began pulling out his shirt...

“This!!”

“Oh...that’s your navel.”

Alvin Hobby (1909-1997), educator, evangelist, translator, writer, registered nurse and amateur astronomer, was missionary to Africa for more than forty years.

Namwianga Christian Secondary School
Box 22
Kalomo, Zambia

2 December 1979

Dear Ba Muluti A. Hobby,

I am sure this letter will come as a surprise to you, but we have felt that we shall fail our duty if we do not indicate our gratitude to the work you have rendered in this country, both as a missionary and an educationist.

We really appreciate your exceptional attitude and dedication to the work in Zambia. As a missionary some of us who have known you for a long time know that you have shown a great example to other missionaries by concentrating on your work as a missionary faithfully and dedicated. When you were still strong you visited many villages in addition to your work as a teacher in order to evangelize them. You always remained doing the work you came for. You have not taken to the wealth of the country but to teach Christ to the people in Zambia. We appreciate the help you are rendering in the church growth in this country by giving spiritual and material support.

As a teacher you have done a lot in the field of education. You have taught most of the people who are running the congregations in Zambia. Your contribution in the field of education cannot be challenged by anyone at the moment. We wish you a good stay in Zambia.

Yours very sincerely,

J. Sibbili

P. E. Mukupa

Martha Moomba

A. Sebesi

Z. Sikabbubba

L. Malindi Syanzalu

B. Sianjina

D.S. Moonga

Chapter 1

The Years of Preparation

Alvin Hobby was born October 20, 1909 at the homeplace of his grandfather, James Polk Hobby, near Ostella, Tennessee. His parents, Ernest R. and Addie Chesser Hobby, named him "James Alvin".

Lack of material possessions in this home was compensated by the love shown to him by his parents and relatives. He knew from the beginning that he was loved and he in turn learned to love, not only the people but also the gently rolling hills, the streams and the woodlands of his home.

In the summer of 1916 Alvin started attending a two-room school at Ostella. He walked two miles to and from school until December, 1918.

During the fall of 1918, Alvin's father bought a farm on Shoal Creek, Lawrence County, Tennessee, two miles from West Point. When the move was made to the new home sixty miles away, Alvin, along with his father and uncle, traveled with the wagons carrying their household goods. The other family members arrived later by train.

Here on their own farm, the hills provided pasture for the family cow. The streams provided running water where Alvin helped his mother with the family laundry, and in the woods he dug ginseng roots which he sold to supplement the family income. His father also trapped and hunted small animals, some for food for the family and some for hides which were sold.

As Alvin became older and stronger he was expected to share in the rugged responsibilities of farm tasks — plowing, planting,



Alvin, standing, right, with his father, mother, and two brothers, Wayman, left and Herman.

harvesting and wood cutting. But he had a bright mind inherited from both his parents, who recognized the value of education for their children and encouraged them to attend church and school. Alvin walked one mile to

and from Chinabee School for the next three years.

Alvin's father encouraged church members to meet together at West Point, and the church began meeting in a church building which was available there. Alvin and his younger brother,

Wayman, rode a horse while their parents and baby Herman rode in a buggy to attend church services. The horse which Alvin and Wayman rode was gentle and obedient, but one Sunday going down a steep, rocky hill, the horse was walking a bit too fast. One of the boys said, "Whoa". The horse stopped short, but Wayman and Alvin kept going over the horse's head and onto the rocks. Following this incident, Alvin's father invented the first "rumble seat", which fit into the back of the buggy. Alvin and Wayman rode in the "rumble seat".

In 1922, Alvin's father sold his farm and became partners with a doctor in the operating of a drug store in West Point. After two years he became the postmaster in West Point, and when Alvin was sixteen years old he helped his father with the post office work. In the same year he graduated from the two-year high school at West Point, took the state teacher's examination and passed. And so he became a teacher at age 16, in a one-room, one-teacher school — Fish Trap School. There were six grades and twenty to thirty pupils, some older and larger than he. Alvin walked the two miles from his home to the school and noticed wild turkey tracks in the path. He taught here for two years but the stress was heavy for one so young.

The arrival of the radio, powered by a car battery, in the West Point community in 1925 enlarged the people's horizons as they listened in utter amazement to people speaking one hundred miles away! Perhaps it was the radio music that inspired Alvin to learn to play the guitar and harmonica. He often played the two instruments at the same time. Later when he was a student at David Lipscomb College he was a member of a stringed quartet and band.

They Called Him Muluti

Alvin graduated as valedictorian from Cornersville High School in the spring of 1930.

R. B. Stone, principal of Cornersville High School, made reservations for both Alvin and Wayman to attend Tennessee Polytechnic Institute in Cookeville, Tennessee, but during the summer of 1930 H. Leo Boles, president of David Lipscomb College, visited their home and persuaded the brothers to attend

David Lipscomb College. They were happy to make this change and roomed together during the 1930-31 school year. Alvin returned to David Lipscomb College alone for the 1931-32 school year and graduated that year from the two-year college.

Due to finances, it was not possible for Alvin to continue his formal education the following year, so he again became a teacher in a one-room school — Ebenezer School in Marshall County. He taught there for three years and during the

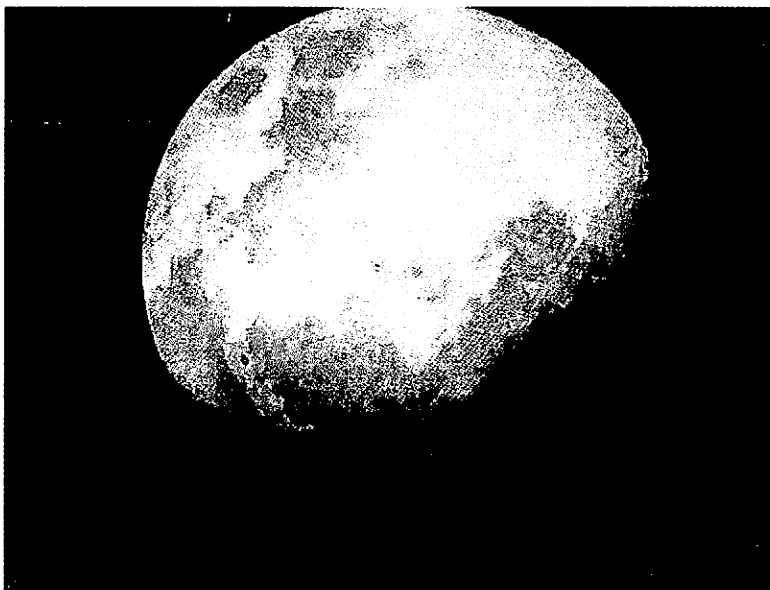


Alvin played the banjo in a stringed band at David Lipscomb College. He is the first person (left) on the front row.

summer months he worked in his Uncle Chesley's general merchandise store in Ostella.

It was during this time that Alvin became interested in astronomy and telescope making. He patiently ground a four-inch mirror and built a reflecting telescope. By attaching his camera to the lens he was able to make pictures of the moon.

During the summer of 1935 Alvin began corresponding with Dean Sears of Harding College in order to try to make arrangements to continue his education at a senior college. There was a girl in the Dean's office who was working as a secretary to the



Sunday night, June 4, 1933. Three nights before the full moon. This photo was made using a four-inch reflecting telescope, made by Alvin Hobby.

Dean in order to finance her college education. She was impressed with the high quality of Alvin's letters and made a mental note to introduce him to her girl friend when he arrived.

Arrangements for attending college were completed. He would be given work to pay for a part of his tuition. Alvin rode the Greyhound Bus all night from his home in Tennessee to Searcy, Arkansas, home of Harding College. He arrived early in the morning on a late summer day in 1935. The first person he saw as he walked across this strange new campus was J. N. Armstrong, then president of Harding College.

Alvin was interested in science and would have liked to have made that his major study, but since he did not have money to pay for laboratory fees for science subjects, he settled for a major in French because he learned languages easily and at the time of his graduation in 1937, he was studying simultaneously four or five different languages.

Alvin was intensely interested in preaching the Gospel, and while he was in college, he wrote a book, **Salvation for a Modern Generation**, which was published and dedicated: "To modern youth for establishing, strengthening and preserving the faith of our fathers; to the fathers, for a better, fuller and more sympathetic understanding of the plight and the problems of modern youth, and to the spread of the gospel through the earth, this book is dedicated."

Alvin continued his interest in telescopes and astronomy, and while he was a student-teacher at Harding College, he set up his telescope one night "near the hedge at the front of the campus along Center Street" so that his students could view the heavens. A former student writes (July 22, 1997), "I did not see how he

could grind the glass so perfectly. I have been so glad he did not let that skill and knowledge die, but used it coupled with scriptures to help the people of Zambia.”

During the time that Alvin was a student in Harding College, Dow Merritt, a missionary from Northern Rhodesia, Africa, visited the Harding campus. Alvin had earlier considered doing mission work in China but that door had been closed by the Chinese government. And so when Mr. Merritt asked for volunteers to go to Northern Rhodesia to teach in a Christian elementary school that was to be started there, Alvin volunteered his services.

The girl was still working in the Dean's office. Plans to introduce Alvin to her friend had not worked out, because the friend was tall and Alvin was not tall enough to please her — and so the girl herself began studying Alvin's transcript to see if he was a good student.

Following graduation in the spring of 1937, Alvin traveled with helpers in order to raise money for travel and support so he could carry out his commitment to teach in the new mission school. He corresponded with “the girl” who worked in the Dean's office, and in one of his letters he casually mentioned that he was raising enough travel money for **two** people! Later in the summer on one of his visits to her they became engaged and she was added to his plans for mission work in Africa.

Alvin found a teaching position in Strawberry High School where he would teach for a year while his fiancée, (the girl), Georgia Pruett, completed her last year in college.

Chapter 2

The Journey to Africa Begins

Early morning — the dew stood on the flowers that Alvin and Georgia had picked in the meadows the day before and strewed along the paths that the bridal party would take. Next door to the Dean's garden, boys and girls hung out the windows of an elementary school, trying to get a better view.

Dean Sears, wearing a white suit, took his place in the garden, followed by Alvin in his new dark suit and accompanied by his one attendant. Georgia, inside Dean Sears' home, wore an ankle-length white dress and bolero of voile and lace. A bouquet of white field daisies rested lightly on her left arm and a wreath of matching daisies encircled her head.

From a piano inside the elementary school came the strains of "To a Wild Rose". Georgia, with her father and her one attendant, marched the flower-strewn path to make her and Alvin one for the next fifty-nine years. It was a solemn moment, yet a moment that held no doubts or fears, but only a joyful expectation of the days that lay ahead.

Many friends wished them well — there was no reception — before they left for the softly rolling hills of middle Tennessee to make further preparations for their journey to Africa, only six weeks away.

Alvin introduced his bride to his Tennessee family and to the old home places that he loved. It was valuable time that would help Georgia to better understand her husband and the scenes that were dear to his heart.

Some relatives and friends did not share their dreams and



Alvin and Georgia Hobby "Just Married". June 3, 1938.

hopes. “Why do you want to go to Africa — throw your young lives away!” — “You have so much potential.” — “Those people don’t have souls!” — “Nothing grows there — you’ll starve!” — “You owe it to us, your parents, to stay here and help us.”

* * * * *

July 20, 1938. Long blasts from the fog horn of the world’s largest passenger ship, the *Queen Mary*. The gang planks were drawn up and the tug boats began pulling the giant ship away from the shore and into the apparently endless waters of the Atlantic Ocean.

Georgia and Alvin were accompanied by older missionaries who had been this way before and filled with the exuberance and love of adventure of youth, they did not question, nor were they afraid. When they could no longer distinguish their friends upon the docks they went to their tiny cabin five decks below the water line. Although it was very small it was well lighted and ventilated — adequate for the five days journey to England.

Up again to the small deck reserved for tourist class passengers, they marveled at the wide expanse of the ocean, the sea birds following the ship, the white caps, and the wake of the ship which was bearing them away from the land of their birth to a strange land which would become their home. If they could have known that this would be their home for the next forty-four years, it would not have mattered.

Sure, it takes a lot of courage
to put things in God’s hands,
To give ourselves completely,
our lives, our hopes, our plans;
To follow where He leads us

and make His will our own.
But all it takes is foolishness
to go the way alone.
(Selected)

Chapter 3

The Need to Become Acquainted — Alvin's First Year In Africa

The journey to Africa required twenty-six days — five days to England and, after four days in England, an additional seventeen days on the ship *Balmoral Castle* to Cape Town, where Alvin and Georgia were met and given hospitality in the homes of Christians.

The Cape Peninsula

Cape Town, the chief city of the Cape Peninsula, is a jewel of a city with traditions, customs and prosperity that is quite different from the countries of the interior. It is an old city known as early as 1488 by Portuguese sailors who named it "The Cape of Storms". In years that followed, British, Dutch, Huguenot French and Xhosa settled in the Cape. The oldest building in South Africa, the Cape Town Castle, was begun in 1666. The city is resplendent with its many magnificent and picturesque halls and churches such as the Old Town House, which houses valuable collections of Dutch and Flemish art.

In Cape Town are docks where ships of all nations meet at an ocean crossroads; and there are quaint, sheltered fishing villages.

Alvin and Georgia delighted in the bright flower markets on Adderly Street, the main street of Cape Town. Also in Adderly Street and close to skyscrapers and big, airy department stores are the simple lines of the old Court of Justice, now a museum.

But the Cape Peninsula has beauty unaffected by time and change. There is the wide expanse of the Atlantic and Pacific

Oceans with their long, white beaches on the one hand and the majestic mountains which form a back-drop to the multi-colored city on the other.

On the slopes behind Table Mountain, Alvin and Georgia visited the Botanic Gardens which contain more than five thousand varieties of the indigenous flora of southern Africa. It was the aptly named "silver trees" and the many varieties of protea which interested them most.

The Cape Peninsula, only 32 miles long and 10 miles wide, with its variety of friendly, hospitable people, its beautiful scenery and Mediterranean-type climate, is a unique place.

Alvin and Georgia and their fellow missionaries remained in the Cape Peninsula area for two weeks making preparations for their journey across the mountains and deserts of the interior to their new home which was about 1,700 miles away. The W. L. Brown family awaited the arrival of their new car which would come on a freight ship in a few days. Alvin and Mrs. Rowe, who was also planning to teach in the new school at Namwianga, shopped for a used car which they could afford to buy jointly. With the help of a mechanic who was also a Christian, they bought a Graham-Paige for about \$140.00. Now it was necessary for them to pass drivers' tests, which included learning how to "double-clutch", a British and South African term. In case brakes failed on the mountain slopes, changing quickly from high to low gear would allow the engine to help them descend the slope more slowly.

Cross-Country

With preparations complete, including food, matches and

water in canvas bags, Alvin and Georgia set out August 30th ahead of the others to make the long trek.

Today the Hobby's children and grandchildren shake their heads in disbelief that their parents/grandparents could have been so young and naive as to undertake a journey of 1,700 miles alone from southern to central Africa, through mountains, karroo (semi-desert), cities and primitive country, in an old car that broke down during the trip and had several flat tires.

Young and naive they were, perhaps, but they did not consider what they were doing to be unusual or dangerous. It was all in a day's work. They trusted God to take care of them and He did.

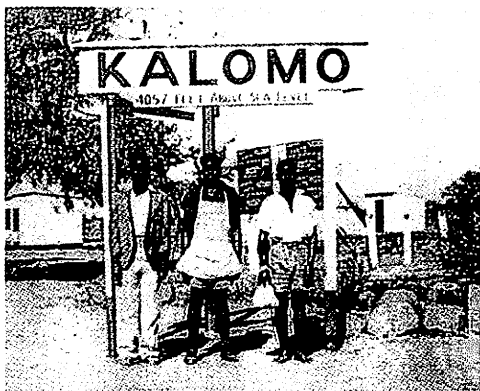
Namwianga Mission

They arrived at Namwianga Mission on Saturday, September 10, 1938. The following Monday, Alvin began teaching in the school for Africans, starting classes at 7:00 A.M. The next day Alvin, Georgia and Mrs. Rowe began regular language study with an African teacher named Nawa who dressed in white shirt and trousers, and sometimes a jacket.

One three-room brick house was ready for occupancy when the new workers arrived. Mrs. Rowe was assigned one room, Alvin and Georgia another and the kitchen was used jointly. There was no bathroom in this little house but work was begun forthwith on an outdoor pit latrine.

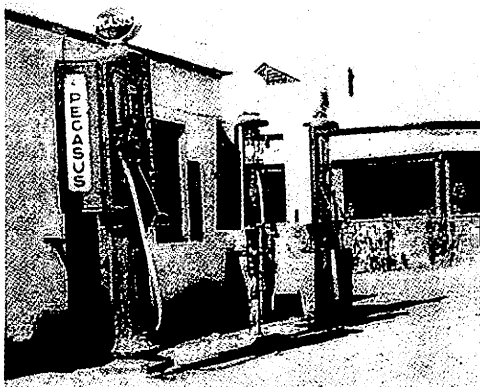
By day four, the African students had observed Alvin and had given him an African name, "Siantontola" — the quiet one.

An ox cart was dispatched with students to the railway sta-



tion three miles away to bring Alvin's two big leather trunks which had arrived by train. The students also bought for Alvin at the store in Kalomo, groceries and necessities such as sugar, oil and matches.

On Sunday, September 18th, Alvin preached. There was a baptism at "Jordan", as the stream was called, but since the one being baptized was not a Mutonga by tribe, three interpreters were needed in order to reach him with his language.



Gasoline Pumps

The older, established missionaries, the Scotts and the Merritts, were generous with their orchard and garden produce and with the wild game which they occasionally felled. When a large antelope was killed some meat was canned in glass jars using a pressure cooker. Cultivated fruits growing on the mission were oranges, lemons, grapefruit, guavas, mangoes, grenadillas and pawpaws.



The Hotel



Main Street Kalomo

Language study continued daily and Nawa, the teacher, taught his three American students many valuable lessons about African customs and thought processes. For example, in addition to their African names, the students chose as it pleased them an English name for themselves. One boy was named "Pumpkin", others were "Sawmill", "Sugar", "Salt", and "White Mother".

The Rains

Nawa reported that when the rains come often locusts come too, sometimes so thick that the sun is eclipsed by them. The people eat locusts, caterpillars and termite kings and queens. Nawa enjoyed only the termites, and once traded a large pot of fish for them.

October 11, 1938, the first rain of the rainy season fell with

some hail. Ten days later there were clouds, lightning and thunder, telling them that the rainy season was near.

The coming of the rains brought many changes. The entire land appeared to become green overnight. After the ground became soft, oxen were inspanned and the garden was plowed and planted in corn, beans, pumpkins and okra.

“Rainbirds”, storks from Europe in flocks of two hundred or so, circled in the sky soon after the rains started and descended to feed on grasshoppers and other insects. Many beautiful, colorful birds such as the roller and the carmine bee-eater were attracted to the bounty of insects. Bright yellow weaver birds lived in great communities and filled entire trees with their skillfully woven nests.

Growing plants attracted other birds. Bright sunbirds fed on nectar and resembled hummingbirds. (There are no hummingbirds in this country.) The great ground hornbill had the appearance of a turkey vulture. The deep resonating sounds that the hornbills made early in the morning became a part of the cherished memories of the land, as did the squawks of wild parrots that came to feed on the ripening wild fruit.

With the rains also came the mosquitoes. Most of them were anopheles, malaria-bearing mosquitoes, and so a daily prophylactic was required and beds had to be protected with mosquito nets. Georgia ordered mosquito netting and Alvin built lightweight wooden rectangular frames that hung above each bed with the frame near the ceiling of the room. The netting encircled the bed and a footing of muslin protected hands from being bitten through the net. The routine ritual of tucking the edge of the mosquito net under the mattress was done each evening at dusk

before the lighting of the oil lamps.

Water supplies became very muddy due to the rains and a search for a better supply failed to yield any, so when the water was carried up from the river, it was poured into forty-gallon drums. Before the water was used it was allowed to stand until the bulk of the dirt settled.

The water problem was partly solved when Alvin installed a one-thousand gallon galvanized metal tank to catch roof water. The tank was brought out from the railway station on an ox cart. Mr. Merritt built a concrete foundation for the tank and Alvin installed it so it would catch water from the roof. By the end of November there was plenty of water in the tank.

Problems

The unusually heavy rains in the 1938-1939 season caused problems with travel. It was almost impossible to go with a vehicle into the villages, and even the main roads were at times inaccessible due to swollen rivers. Mr. Merritt had been to Kabanga Mission, fifty miles away, but while he was at the mission there came a heavy rain, which flooded the river and made crossing it impossible. At such times there was nothing to do but "sit it out". Mr. Merritt sat on the river bank from 7:00 P.M. until 4:00 A.M. when the water receded sufficiently for him to cross safely. But after he arrived home he suffered a chill caused by malaria which had surfaced in his system, perhaps as a result of sitting so long with wet feet.

Georgia, too, became ill with chills and fever.

The most serious problem, however, presented itself and caused concern when Mrs. Merritt found a lump in her breast

which she suspected was cancer. A biopsy confirmed her suspicions, which was devastating, because treatment required that she leave her two young daughters, travel long distances, and remain away from home for long periods of time. The cancer claimed her life two years later.

Bad news came from Kabanga Mission. One of the mission's most trusted teachers became drunk, along with three others. There was a fight and one teacher was badly beaten. Mr. Merritt dismissed two of them, but the other two who repented were given work at reduced wages for some time. This was intended to serve as a warning to the other teachers.

Lions

Were lions a problem? Alvin was aware that they had the potential, but he never carried a gun even though on one trip into the villages, lion spoor was found on the path that the men were taking.

There were lions in the area of Kalomo. Nawa said that three years previously about one and one-half miles from the mission, while he was guarding a carcass which had been the lions' prey, he had been surrounded by twelve lions. It was later reported that a lion had caught and eaten a man about fifteen miles away.

Kalomo, where the store, post office and gasoline pump were located, was three miles from Namwianga Mission. For many years Alvin and Georgia attended Sunday morning worship at the Kalomo township. One Sunday morning when they arrived, there was more than the usual excitement. The man who usually operated the gasoline pump and sold gasoline had tried to shoot a lion with a shotgun. As most hunters can tell you, a shotgun is

not the weapon of choice for shooting a lion. The man had been mauled, causing long and deep gashes on his arms and he was taken to a hospital where he recovered after a long hospitalization.

To think on these things arouses one's imagination so that he may awake at night, hear the cattle lowing, and imagine that they are stampeding because lions have come.

Home on the Veld (Grasslands)

Alvin and Georgia took walks to explore the flora and fauna in the "vlei" (swampy area) behind their house, and they were delighted with the interesting things they found. Sometimes "duikers" or other small buck were seen. There were wild guinea fowl, candelabrum trees and the reptile called a "chameleon" that can look up with one eye and down with the other. He can also change color to blend with his surroundings. The Africans feared him as they would fear a snake but for a different reason. They believed that this harmless reptile could somehow give them leprosy.

The older missionaries had loaned odds and ends of furniture to Alvin and Georgia to be used until they could acquire furniture of their own. In February a mattress and two rocking chairs which Alvin had ordered before leaving the USA finally arrived. Alvin used the crating which was around this furniture to build kitchen tables; and he worked in his spare time throughout the year to build other pieces: two cupboards, a dining table, lamp stand, dresser stool and a bed. Some of the pieces were put together with bolts and screws and they are probably still in use, for they were sturdy after more than forty years.

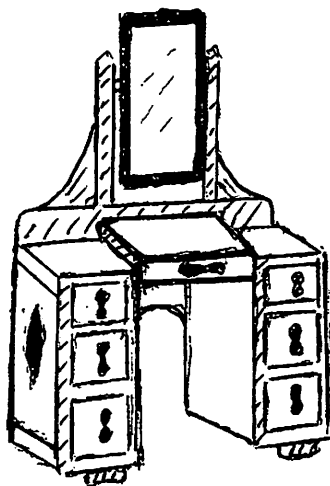
A new worker in Alvin's home, Noah, had never before seen the inside of a European home. He didn't know how to open the stove, build a fire or open a drawer. And he didn't understand English. But he was eager to learn and tried very hard to do his work well. He also helped Georgia with her Tonga-speaking by correcting her mistakes.

One day Georgia started into the house and saw Noah standing in front of the dresser, staring. She stepped back and waited, but he continued to stare at something. Georgia decided to find out what it was all about. Noah pointed to celluloid dolls on the dresser and said, "Bantu na?" (Are they people?). Georgia tried to explain to him that they were dolls and that children play with them.

At Kabana Mission the people thought that the Merritt children's dolls were premature babies that the parents were allowing the children to play with. Mr. Merritt tore up the doll to show them what it was made of.

Christmas in the Southern Hemisphere

Christmas comes in mid-summer in Africa. The Christmas party, a yearly children's event, was the time when Alvin and Georgia saw the white people of their community for everyone attended this



The Dresser

social gathering. Before the party someone collected money from the parents and purchased the toys for Santa's sack. If you wonder how Santa can pull his sleigh without snow, I'll tell you. Santa comes in an ox-cart, pulled by — yes, oxen!

Alvin made Georgia a beautiful dresser for her first Christmas in Africa — made it from plywood tea boxes and packing cases — and she loved it!

Progress

A report from the school inspector said that the school was better than it had ever been.

Several new buildings were being constructed. One was a new classroom and Alvin took interest in equipping and decorating it. Construction had begun on a school for girls located across the road from the homes of Alvin and Georgia and Mrs. Rowe, and the walls of the houses were high enough that they could be seen from Alvin's house, across the tall grass.

A year after their arrival on the mission, Mrs. Rowe's house, which was identical to the Hobby's house and quite near it, was completed and she began moving into it.

When the students returned from their December break those who had been sent to preach during December reported that they had worked very hard, but as one said, "Since they (the people) have not heard before, they do not know how to repent, though they would like to." These reports showed that "the field was white unto harvest."

Teaching aids for the school were continually being created and added to the meager existing supply. Georgia drew and

painted maps for Alvin's classes, such as the map of Palestine. She also made a color chart so Alvin could teach color names. In the Tonga language there are only three words for color: red, black and white. In describing green, one might say, "a bit black, like grass."

How Was That, Again?

Joshua had made a toy out of a dry gourd and a string by piercing the gourd and passing a string through it. By maneuvering the string he could cause the gourd to pause on the string as he wished. He announced that he could discern by this method if anyone had been stealing from him, and who the culprit was.

A student came to the Hobby house and asked for Mrs. Rowe's "looking glass". Alvin was puzzled and upon inquiring learned that Mrs. Rowe had asked the student to bring her glasses.

Alvin wore overshoes to school during the rains. The students were amused that he had worn two pair of shoes and had taken off one pair. Mr. Merritt pondered the reaction that might result from someone taking out false teeth. This would not be a wise thing to do, however, since the missionary should not intentionally call attention to differences between himself and those he is trying to teach.

A New Hobby

Alvin's and Georgia's plans included a new baby for early April. Mrs. Rowe accompanied Georgia to Livingstone, eighty-two miles away, one month before the baby was due and remained with her there so she would be near the hospital for the

delivery. Maggie, a male student, also accompanied them so that he could help them wherever he was needed.

A small apartment was found for Georgia and Mrs. Rowe in Livingstone. Maggie found accommodations with other students.

Each Sunday Maggie dressed in his best clothes and led the church service in Georgia's and Mrs. Rowe's apartment. He chose Bible passages for reading, led the prayer in Tonga and led mostly Tonga songs. But Maggie didn't like the town of Livingstone. One of his friends introduced him to the bar and dance hall. Maggie reported that what he saw there was "very, very bad". He refused to go again.

The town of Livingstone is located on the Zambezi River, just seven miles from the famous Victoria Falls. Here could be found a garage, a doctor, a hospital, a bank and shops. From Kalomo the elevation drops from 4,267 feet to 3,349 feet in Livingstone. The difference in elevation causes Livingstone to be considerably hotter than Namwianga.

Mrs. Rowe and Georgia took long walks every day. Flame trees had large, red tulip-like flowers in the tops of huge old trees. Georgia thought they were the most beautiful trees she had ever seen. Livingstone was an old town and there were many species of beautiful trees to be enjoyed.

Alvin received a letter from Georgia every day, telling him about the spray from Victoria Falls which could be seen from Livingstone, and about the wailing and drum-beating which could be heard each night. He learned that she was very homesick!

One morning after Georgia had been in Livingstone for nearly a month, she was awakened by an exclamation from Mrs. Rowe. Sure enough, Alvin's car drove into the yard with Alvin and the Merritt family! Georgia was overjoyed. The travellers had left Namwianga about 2:00 P.M. the day before but due to the heavy rains the road was filled with deep mud holes. Alvin was covered with mud and his legs were injured from trying to extricate the car. Finally they gave up and slept on the ground.

Georgia made arrangements for Mrs. Rowe to return with the Merritts so that Alvin could stay. The Merritts bought a shovel and an ax and started back to Namwianga the same day, but the car again became hopelessly bogged down in the mud and they spent another night sleeping on the ground. Baby David was born the next morning but Alvin was not allowed to remain at the hospital during the birth.

After Georgia was discharged from the hospital, Maggie became very upset whenever the baby cried and begged that he be fed. He once told Georgia, "Muluti should beat you!" for allowing the baby to cry.

Back at Namwianga David had many visitors, both neighbors and students, who signed his baby book. Among them were "Spider" and "Matches".

The Cool Season

By the month of May the rains had ended and the mornings had become quite cool — 59 degrees F.

The school year ended with games, contests, singing, memory work and speeches. For prizes, soap, envelopes and New Testaments were given. One contest: eating a syrup-covered

biscuit from a string, then rooting in white flour for a coin.

The roads were now dry and trips into the villages were possible.

A Visit to Kabanga Mission

Since Alvin arrived at Namwianga Mission at the beginning of the school year and the rainy season, he had had little opportunity during his first year to become acquainted with village people.

Most of the village schools which Namwianga Mission sponsored were in the vicinity of Kabanga Mission and were in session during the dry season, while Namwianga Mission was having its long break. It was Alvin's job to visit and inspect these schools and to meet with the people around camp fires in the evening to sing, pray and teach lessons from God's Word.

There was a large vacant house at Kabanga Mission where the Merritt family had formerly lived. Georgia and Mrs. Rowe decided to accompany Alvin and to camp in the old house while Alvin visited the surrounding villages and schools.

An ox cart was packed with the supplies that would be needed and sent on two days ahead. Alvin, Georgia, David, Mrs. Rowe and Noah, an African helper, went by car.

Even today memories of Kabanga Mission as it was in 1939 bring many nostalgic and happy thoughts and **wonder** that the earlier missionaries sought-out and chose such a remote area to start a mission! Perhaps they chose this location because it was near many villages and people. But it was fifty miles from the town of Kalomo and the railway station, and yet another ninety



“Just how does that camera work?” A woman from the Zambezi Valley.
Photograph by Georgia Hobby.

miles to the town of Livingstone.

Nevertheless, it was a beautiful site — on high ground, overlooking the Zambezi Valley. The primitive Zambezi Valley people would come to the mission to trade at the little store or to be treated for illnesses by Dow Merritt.

While Alvin and his group were there, three girls from the Zambezi Valley visited Kabanga. They had grease mixed with red ocher all over their hair and bodies. (Ocher is a clay, colored with an iron oxide, used as a pigment.) Two teeth or small shells hung from a forelock of hair, and a ring of teeth or small shells decorated the tops of their heads. There were sticks of varying lengths through their noses, and stacks of brass bracelets on their arms and legs. A baby in a sling on the back of one of them also had ocher in its hair. The girls were afraid of the white people at first but when they became acquainted they asked for soap.

When Alvin and his helpers returned to Kabanga after they had been in the villages for a few days, they reported 48 baptisms during the week. Alvin had a surprise for Georgia — a small goat which the chief had given him. They named her “Mabala”, meaning “spots”.

They remained at Kabanga for two weeks and during that time Georgia and Mrs. Rowe had classes for the women, teaching them lessons from the Bible as well as care of their children.

Toward the end of their stay Georgia put David to bed one evening and left Noah to watch him. Then she, Alvin and Mrs. Rowe walked to Siamwatachela's Village, two miles away where Alvin would preach. Three separate fires were kindled — for women, men and children. Chairs were brought out for their visitors and one by one the people knelt to greet the visitors indi-

vidually. One can only admire the graciousness, friendliness and generosity of village people.

Since their visit to Kabanga was drawing to a close, it was planned that students and teachers from all the village schools would assemble at Kabanga for a combined meeting. Each of the schools had planned a program of songs, dances and readings, which continued throughout the day, with breaks for insima (stiff cornmeal cereal) with vegetables. In the evening there was a meeting planned to help the students become better Christians.

An excerpt from a letter written by Alvin, June 29, 1939, to a friend, Malcom Hinckley, in the U.S.A. tells of his visits to the villages around Kabanga Mission:

“A typical day was about as follows: We would be ready and leave for the next village a little before noon. These villages were all the way from three to fifteen or twenty miles apart. There were no roads except foot paths. Most of the time we were able to ride the bicycles; but sometimes we had to walk and push them up hills, across rivers, around rocks, and through swamps where the grass is higher than one's head and the path is almost indistinguishable. If there were any other villages on the way and the people were at home, we would stop and preach. About the middle of the afternoon we would reach our destination for the day and go directly to the school. By the time we had observed the work, made our speech to the pupils, etc., the chief would have learned that we were there, and would come out to greet us. Arrangements would then be made for services that night and our sleeping there. A camping place would be selected and a group of boys and girls sent out

with their short handle hoes to clean off the grass. When the carriers came in, a fire was built and water brought. From then on to dark I would be busy boiling drinking water, cooking supper, fixing the bed, giving medicine to those who asked for it, and talking to the chief. Salt was carried for the purpose of giving each chief about two cupfuls as a token of friendship. They, in turn, would generally give me presents such as milk, eggs, chickens, or even goats! I received one goat; and the carriers really had a time deciding which one was going to lead that goat to the mission. The people in the village generally gave the boys their food, though they carried a supply of corn meal and peas in case they needed them. About 7:30 another fire would be built and the people of the village would come out for services. The women would sit around one fire and the men around the other. We carried 18 song books in the native language. One of the boys with us (all of whom were Christians) would lead about three songs and call on another boy for prayer. Then after another song I would speak on some simple subject and the interpreter would interpret. At the close, or after the close, of the services, all would sit down and "chat" for about 30 minutes all so natural that I still believe that human nature is about the same the world over. Then to bed. The fire was kept burning all night with the boys sleeping on one side and me on the other. The next morning after breakfast sometimes there would be another short service and any baptisms there might be attended to before we left for another village. And so on for five days and nights.

"Sometimes, after the night service, the men and women would get into an argument (always friendly). Many

of the women here rub red material all over their bodies. So, one night the men and women argued as to which were the dirtiest, the men or the women, the men of course saying something about the women's smearing themselves with red paint (something like iron oxide or "red ochre"). One of the men said that soap stinks. And for the sake of the argument the women said they did not want any soap because it "finished" their red paint. But they do. They will almost swap some of the brass off their legs for a piece of soap. Most of the men, however, do think that it is just a fad with the women. But they have their soap anyway if it is obtainable.

"In some of the villages there were children who had never seen a white person before. One little boy asked his parents if I had something rubbed on my body to make me white. He could hardly believe it when told that I had always been this way.

"The only animals I saw on the trip were a squirrel and two oribi, a kind of small deer. We saw signs of a lion that the boys said had passed 3 or 4 days before we did. But I was not afraid although I had neither gun nor pocket knife on the whole trip. We sat down by a water hole and ate dinner very near the place where we saw signs of the lions.

"We found some good schools (judged by standards of this country). The total enrollment of the nine schools is 310, about one-fourth of which is girls. During the first week there were 48 baptisms and one confession of sins. During the second week there were six baptisms (one a chief). This was largely the result of our school program in which the Bible is studied daily. At the present there seems

to be a keen interest among the people for schools. Some of the chiefs asked that they be given teachers for nine months a year. Too bad we don't have more teachers. But that is my main work, to train teachers for these out-schools."

The next day was Sunday and there was an early church service so the boys and girls could start home, but before they left they came to Alvin to be treated for their many health problems. This task accomplished, Alvin and his group could load their car and begin their journey home to Namwianga. En route they met a messenger with a letter from Mr. Merritt asking them to return and relieve him at Namwianga so he could take Mrs. Merritt to Salisbury, Southern Rhodesia, for treatment.

In July frost and ice killed tomatoes, beans and bananas. Frost and ice were infrequent in this area. It was unlikely to happen the next year. A lot of work had gone into growing the tomatoes. Now there would be no fresh vegetables except carrots until November.

In early August boys began arriving from the railway station at Kalomo with bundles of their possessions on each end of a stick. (Boys never carry bundles on their heads as girls do.) A new school year with its endless possibilities was beginning. Alvin could review the past year with satisfaction and look forward to the new year with hope.

Chapter 4
The Need for Learning to Read and
Reason —
The Mission School — Training
African Teachers

A God so awesome, so loving and powerful. A God who loved people so much that He sent His Son to make eternal life possible. A God who gave a rule-book for their lives. But what is the use of a rule book when people can't read? Alvin had come to teach these people, but how to proceed?

The missionaries who had gone before had faced the same problems. John Sherriff came to Southern Rhodesia from New Zealand in 1897. **Sherriff's first convert taught his own people, and at the time of Sherriff's death in 1935, this first convert had brought eight hundred of his own race to the Lord.** It became apparent that the best way to take the Gospel to the people was to train indigenous workers, so Forest Vale Mission was established in Southern Rhodesia by Mr. Sherriff. Young men could work for their food while attending school, learn to read, become Christians and return home as teachers of their own people.

This method proved logical and efficient and subsequent efforts in Northern and Southern Rhodesia followed the pattern begun by John Sherriff.

W. N. Short came to Southern Rhodesia in 1922 and began work at Sinde Mission near Livingstone, Northern Rhodesia, in 1923. A church had already been established in the area a few

years previously by Peter Masiya, a pupil of John Sherriff.

Mr. and Mrs. Short were joined in 1924 by Ray and Zelma Lawyer. When Dow and Alice Merritt arrived in Northern Rhodesia two years later they and the Lawyers began a new work at Kabanga Mission, which is about fifty miles from Kalomo and the railway line and about 124 miles from Sinda Mission.

When the Browns, Scotts and Reeses joined these workers, another mission station, Namwianga Mission, about three miles from Kalomo and the railway line, was begun in 1932.

When Alvin, Georgia and Mrs. Rowe joined these forces in



Brick-Making

These are large bricks called "Kimberly bricks" which are used without being baked in a kiln. Buildings made of these are not as permanent as buildings erected with burned bricks, and they require wide, overhanging grass-thatched roofs to protect them from rain. November, 1959.



Alvin standing near a kiln of bricks which have been burned and are now ready for use.

1938 they found only the Merritt family at Namwianga Mission, but the Scott family lived nearby. Ray Lawyer had been killed in an accident when he fell on his spear and Zelma and their children had returned to the States.

Mr. Merritt had a vision for the school and he was busy, with the help of African workers, making bricks, firing them and building the necessary classrooms and houses for students, teachers and other workers. He hadn't time to do the teaching — so he was encouraged when the three new workers arrived, and one of them a full-time teacher and principal for the boys' school — Alvin.

Two days after his arrival on the mission Alvin began his work, assisted by Mrs. Rowe and by African teachers in the lower

grades.

The African students were respectful, obedient and intensely interested in learning. Alvin was pleased when they began to ask questions: "If John the Baptist was a good preacher, why did he have to eat locusts and wild honey?" "If it is true that 'not that which entereth into the mouth defileth the man', why is it wrong to drink beer?" "If children do not have to answer for the sins of their parents, why were the children destroyed in Sodom and Gomorrah?"

Alvin found that the students did well when he assigned memory work to them, even though what they were learning was in a "foreign" language (English). They took pride in memorizing more than the verses assigned. It was not uncommon to see a student walking along the road reading his Bible or working with an open Bible nearby so he could memorize as he worked.

One day Alvin wrote the names of the books of the New Testament on the blackboard, thinking that the students might memorize a few of them soon and the remainder in a week or two. The next morning they were able to repeat all twenty-seven in their proper order!

The students received "exercise books" in which they kept careful notes. They expected Alvin to write the most important points on the blackboard so they could be copied. They also copied Alvin's handwriting.

Surprising answers were sometimes found to exam questions: Question: Name a winged mammal (Answer: a bat).

Student Answer: "An angel."

When you are a teacher in Africa there are certain things that

are essential to know. Perhaps the most important is that a teacher never calls his student "silly" or "stupid." This is known as "cursing" in its worst form.

Alvin was creative and took many innovative approaches to his teaching. One of the most effective was the sunlight projector which he invented, using parts from an old movie projector. Since there was no electricity he used sunlight by reflecting it from a mirror onto the lens of the projector. Outside the school room Alvin built a brick pillar and on top of the pillar he mounted a revolving disc onto which an adjustable mirror was mounted. With a one-hand operation it was easy for a student to keep the beam of light trained onto the projector lens. But he must be



The student is turning a revolving mirror on the stand to reflect a beam of sunlight into the projector in the window.

alert. A short lapse of attention by the student was soon detected by loss of light for the operation of the projector.

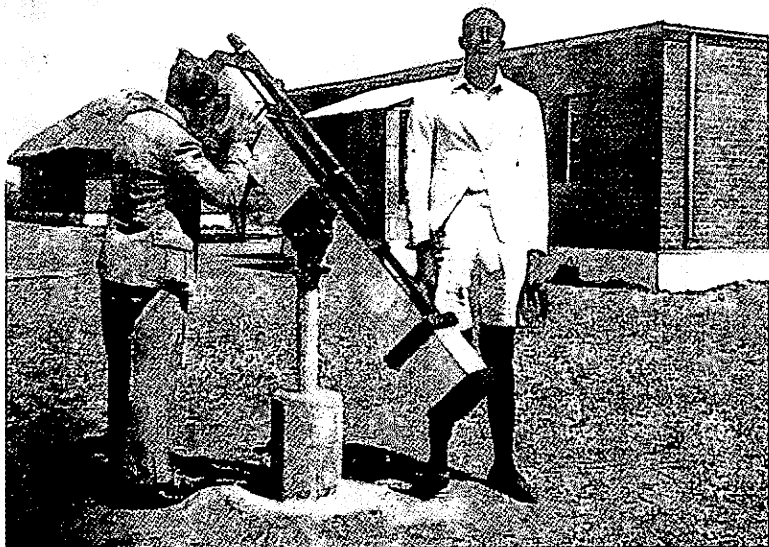
The Northern Rhodesia Education Department was eager to lend Alvin filmstrips on one hundred and thirty educational topics. Alvin bought filmstrips illustrating many parts of both the Old and New Testaments. Most of the students had never seen pictures projected, and as you may imagine, his invention was a complete "hit".

Sometimes he placed his glasses over a small opening of a darkened room and allowed one of the students to go outside and move about. This produced a moving picture on the screen, live and in color, of the student who was outside and delighted the audience inside. It only added interest and amusement that the performing student appeared on the screen upside down!

Another educational tool made by Alvin was a six-inch reflecting telescope. Before coming to Africa Alvin had built a four-inch telescope using a mirror which he had ground himself. Using his expertise gained in the first venture, he produced a six inch mirror.

Soon after the completion of it Alvin allowed one of his students to view a fellow student some distance away. The student jumped back from the telescope as if he had seen a ghost. "Ha!", he exclaimed. "This thing is no good." The only explanation he could think of for such a phenomenon was witchcraft.

Creativity was required to solve with grace and magnanimity some of the problems that Alvin encountered daily. Outstanding among the perplexities was the pervasive custom of borrowing. No matter what Alvin possessed, it was assumed that he would be happy to "help" another person by lending it to him.



Alvin looking through his telescope which has a six-inch mirror. Two classrooms of the boys' school are in the background.

Alfred Sibesi stands nearby.

Money, of course, was top of the list. One could not simply say, "I don't have it." No one would believe that. Alvin solved the dilemma by placing a reasonable amount of money in a coffee can and labeling it, "For Lending." When someone asked to borrow, the amount was removed from the can. It was seldom repaid. When the store was depleted and another person asked to borrow, Alvin could truthfully say, "The money I had for lending is all finished; but so-and-so owes me five kwacha and if you can collect from him I'll be happy to lend it to you."

Probably second on the list of borrowing desirables was the bicycle. Alvin solved this problem in a similar manner. He

bought a new bicycle which he dubbed "The bicycle for lending." Care of machinery is not one of the strong traits of African students and so the bicycle was often returned with a flat tire or a bent frame which rendered the bicycle useless. When the next student asked to borrow a bicycle Alvin presented him with the "Lending Bicycle" and agreed that he might use it if he would first carry out the necessary repairs.

Alvin built book shelves, collected the available books and started a school library with a system for checking out books.

The first year the school taught grades one through seven. Eighth grade was added the second year. After the students had passed the "primer" it was necessary for them to begin their



Alvin in classroom with students, who wear khaki uniforms. The student on the left is an albino African. He was very intelligent but his skin sun-burned easily and his eyesight was poor. March, 1961.

learning in the English language — a language foreign and difficult for them. By the time they had completed the eighth grade they had a fair knowledge of English.

By the second year the enrollment at the boys' school had increased to 105. Enough buildings had been completed for the girls' school to open, but it was off to a slow start because parents were reluctant to entrust their girls to a co-ed school. They had no need for worry, however, as Mrs. Rowe was very strict. The girls had separate classes and at night they were locked inside a high security fence made of barbed wire. When these facts became known, the enrollment increased.

On rare occasions the boys were allowed to inspect the



Arriving for a new term at school, these girls walked from the railway station three miles away, carrying their possessions on their heads. July, 1960.



The girls are making mattresses from burlap bags filled with grass. The green dresses trimmed with white are school uniforms. Two dormitories appear in the background. These were built of burned bricks and have asbestos roofs. August, 1959.

housekeeping of the girls in their quarters. This is a powerful incentive to neatness the world over! But there was no furniture in the dormitory. Each girl had a paper suitcase for her few clothes and two thin blankets for sleeping on the concrete floor. Mrs. Rowe taught the girls to make clothes hangers from sticks and string, and they built from poles some racks on which to hang their clothes.

One day the student who was recognized as the class clown said to Alvin, "Muluti, I don't feel well."

"Why don't you just go ahead and try to do your work," Alvin replied.



School girls sit in a circle with feet toward the center. A classmate is passed around as they sing. Dormitories made of burned bricks with grass thatched roofs are in the background. Bricks for the houses were moulded and burned on the mission. October, 1942.

After a time, "Muluti, I'm sick. I need to leave."

"There's only a little time left of this class period, Lamech. Just try to finish this assignment," Alvin told him.

And again, "Muluti, I'm very sick."

Alvin looked at Lamech more closely and saw that, sure enough, he did appear to be ill. He allowed Lamech to go to the dorm accompanied by Joshua.

Soon Joshua came bursting into the classroom. "Muluti! A snake! A snake!"

Alvin dismissed the class and hurriedly followed Joshua to

the dorm. There he found a coiled snake under the blankets in Lamech's bed. Lamech had been bitten before he came to class. Alvin killed the snake and Lamech recovered. In later years after Alvin became a registered nurse, he kept antivenin in the clinic, but at this time there was none. The venom of the snake that bit Lamech was apparently not as deadly as that of most African snakes.

In the African mind snakes are closely associated with witchcraft. Probably Lamech felt that he had an enemy who was trying to "witch" him.



Every Saturday morning, the school girls were given a task that they all were familiar with. It had been the work of village women from time immemorial — to scour the countryside for dry sticks which could be used as fuel. In this picture, the girls return with enough wood to last for one week, for their own needs. August, 1959.

On another occasion one of the African teachers burst excitedly into Alvin's office to report to Alvin that someone was using witchcraft against him. When Alvin inquired about it the teacher assured him that it was true because he had found a snake coiled up on his desk. Under these circumstances the teacher would not consider killing the snake, so Alvin killed it for him. According to African beliefs witchcraft does not affect the white man.

Teacher Training

A school for training African teachers, so they in turn would be able to teach children in the villages, was planned from the beginning. The building for teacher-training was begun the first year and Alvin wrote that it would soon be ready for equipment. "This equipment will consist of books, maps, charts, etc., besides the necessary seats, desks, tables and chairs. The building is going to be a good one, and with proper equipment we can have an excellent school."

Teacher training was begun in 1942, with Alvin doing the training, and continued until 1954. Two categories of teachers were trained: (1) **Junior teachers**, who were trained for one year and became qualified to teach pupils in the first four grades, mainly in village schools; (2) **Elementary teachers**, who were trained for two years and became qualified to teach the first six grades and to be head teachers of the village and middle schools. On completion of the courses the candidates sat for Government Examinations and on successfully passing the examinations they were awarded Government Teacher's Certificates.

Following is an excerpt from a letter written by one of these students, Steven Moomba, to Alvin, April 4, 1988:

"I write to inform you that on July 7, 1951 you wrote me a letter requesting me to join Teacher Training at Namwianga which I accepted. Your choice to me is more than what I should express in my life. You were directed by God to choose me some life time career, I have up to now when I have been awarded a pension, 34 years, 6 months. But better still has been associated to religion which I still put in my for front. Joshua said, "As for me and my family/house we shall serve Jehovah."

D. S. Mulamfu, one of the most respected of teachers in Zambia, wrote in 1987,

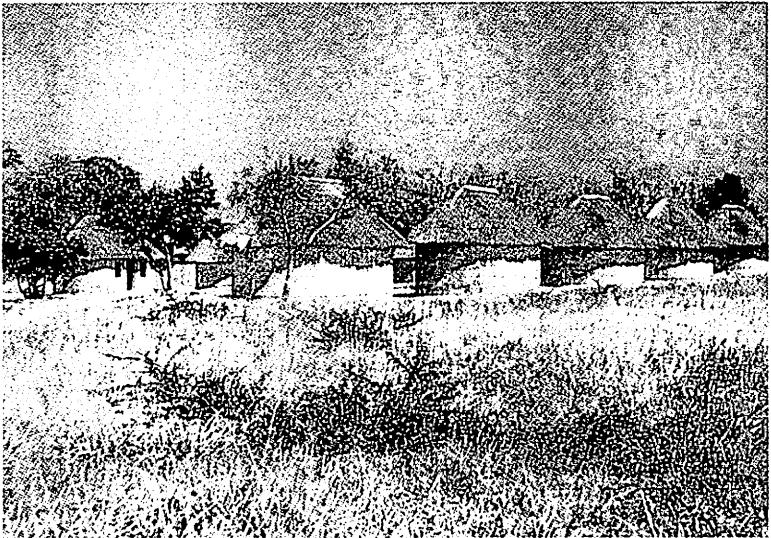
"Mr. Hobby, I wish you could be made young again, so that you could come and teach in the Teacher Training



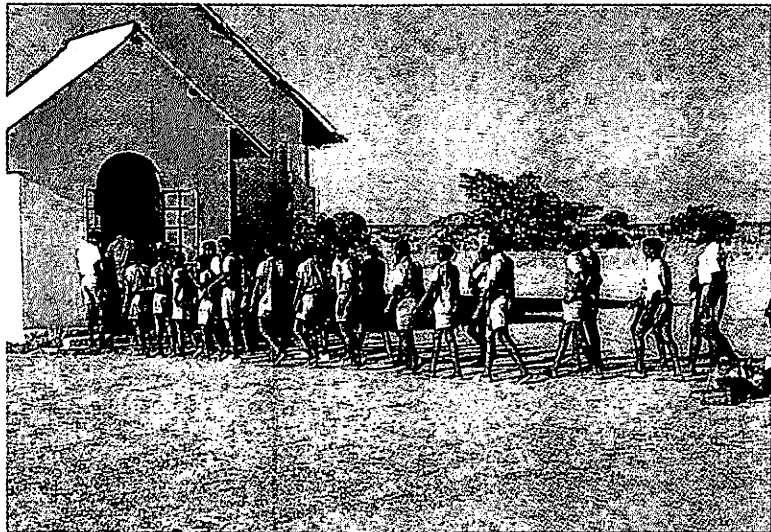
Namwianga Primary School Band. November, 1961.

College which is being built at Namwianga. You know among the teachers you taught are found some of the best teachers in the country.”

Alvin continued as principal of Namwianga Primary School for twenty-two years.



Boys' dormitories at Namwianga Primary School, July, 1960. These buildings are made of burned bricks and thatched with grass. There are no door or window shutters.



Boy students march from their classrooms to the Namwianga church building to attend chapel. November, 1961.

Chapter 5
The Need for Books —
Translation Work

Alvin's most treasured possession by far was his leather bound Tonga Bible which was presented to him by The British and Foreign Bible Society for his help in the production of the Bible over a period of twenty years. It was the first Bible that the Ba-Tonga people had ever had. Alvin did not do much of the actual translation of it, but he was on the committee of those who translated it and when the translation was complete he and a Mutonga were chosen to do the proof-reading. This task required a year. Inside the front cover The British and Foreign Bible Society placed this little plaque:

Presented to

Mr. Alvin Hobby

by the Committee of the

**BRITISH & FOREIGN
BIBLE SOCIETY**

*in grateful recognition
of the service rendered in
preparing this version*

H. K. Mouthra.

p. Secretary for Translations

THE BIBLE HOUSE

LONDON.

April 1964

Not many books were available in the Tonga language which was one of the four major dialects of Northern Rhodesia. Alvin saw the need, and over the years a number of books which he had translated from English to Tonga were published.

Perhaps two of the most important were books of Old and New Testament stories. The education department of Northern Rhodesia adopted **Makani a-Bibele Lyeciindi** (Old Testament Stories) which contained fifty-five stories, as a text to be used as a reader in the fourth grade in all the village schools throughout the Tonga-speaking area, except the Catholic schools.

Translated from Chitonga to English, the first two paragraphs of this book reads as follows:

An Amazing World

"In the beginning God created the heavens and the earth" (Genesis 1:1).

"This amazing world where we stay has not always been seen. The heavens have not always been above our heads as now. Once upon a time the sun didn't shine. There were no stars to twinkle. There was no moon to shine at night. Long ago there was no earth and no heavens.

"Then who made all these things? It was God. He created them all. It is He who made everything at the beginning of time. *'In the beginning God created the heavens and the earth.'*"

The first printing, which was done by United Society for Christian Literature in London, went down with a ship during World War II. It was reprinted in 1945 and again in 1950.



The people in Wacila Village who are able to read receive copies of New Testament Stories. 1970.

Makani A-Bibele Lipya (New Testament Stories) which contained thirty stories, was published in the USA in 1942.

Georgia wrote a book on child care and training and family relations called **Ziiyo Zyabazyali Bana-Afrika** (Lessons for African Parents). Alvin, with an African helper, translated it into Tonga and it was published in 1946 and again in 1950 by United Society for Christian Literature in London. This organization subsidized the printing of such books, making them affordable to the ba-Tonga people.

Other publications in the Tonga language translated by Alvin were: **Munali** — a story of the life of David Livingstone; **Chilengwa Cipya** — (A New Creation) written in English by Dennis Allen, was a book for new Christians; **Lweendo Iwa-**



Alvin Hobby with helper L. Malindi Syanzalu translating books from English to the Tonga language.

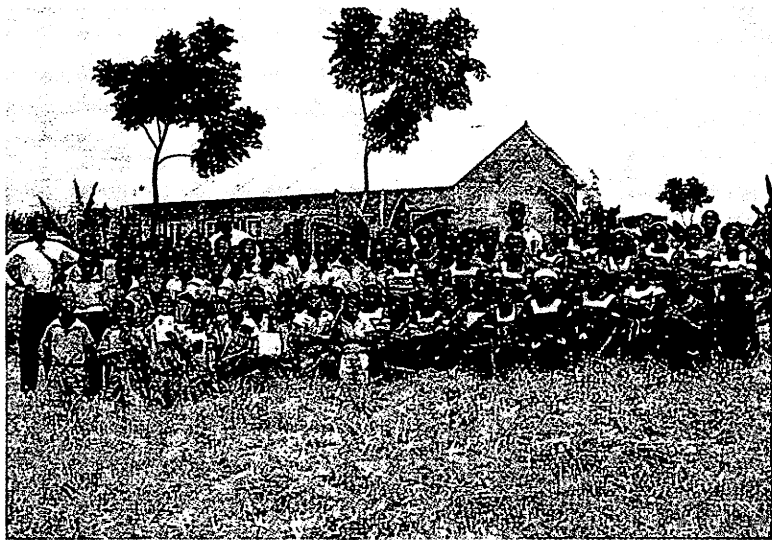
Silweendo — (Pilgrim's Progress) by John Bunyan; and **English-Tonga Phrase book.**

Chapter 6

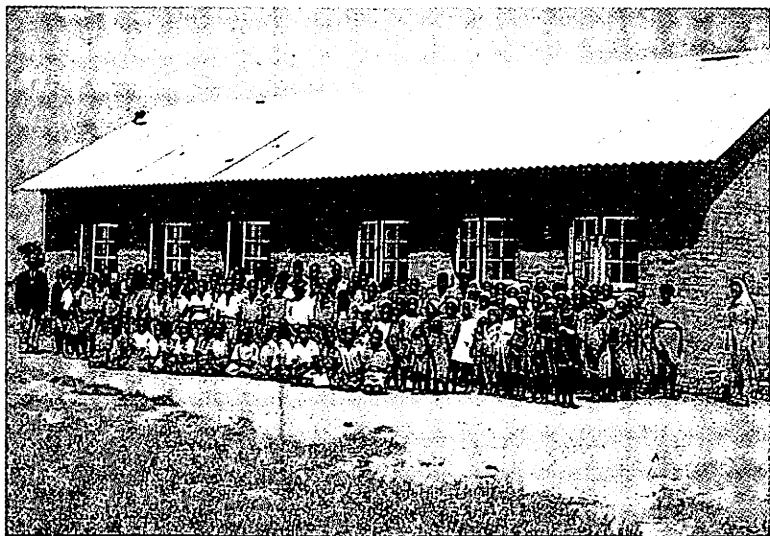
The Need for Schools in the Villages

At one time Namwianga conducted and managed three mission schools, at Namwianga, Kabanga and Sinde, and two town schools, at Kalomo and Livingstone. Besides these there were fourteen village schools in the surrounding villages. The total enrollment of all these schools was about 1,500 boys and 1,000 girls, each with a daily Bible class.

The missionaries were able to carry on the work of village schools with little expense because of the high value that the village people placed on education for their children. When they wished to have a school in their village, the people agreed to build the school house using poles and mud or bricks for the



Town school at Kalomo, 1961. The students are wearing school uniforms.



Georgia's Sunday Bible Class at Kalomo. 1953.

walls, and a grass thatch for the roof. They also agreed to supply a house and food for the teacher.

Sometimes the work of the missionaries was to oversee the building of the school house, supervise the teaching and the school, deliver supplies to the school and bring the monthly pay check to the teacher. The one with these responsibilities was known as the "Manager of Schools." Alvin served in this capacity for a short time, but J. C. Shewmaker and Leonard Bailey were usually the managers.

Those teachers who were trained at Namwianga learned more of God and of His Word before they were sent out to teach the children.



Thatching a village school house at Nyawa Village.

In April or May when the school year at Namwianga was completed and the dry season set in, Alvin headed for the villages to visit the schools and preach in the villages at night. Many of these schools were near Kabanga Mission and sometimes Georgia and the children would camp in one of the vacant houses at Kabanga Mission while Alvin made his daily visits to the villages. This was a change in routine that the family enjoyed. Kabanga Mission was fifty miles from the railway station near the Zambezi Valley. The people were primitive and friendly. The air was cool, dry and pure. In those gently rolling hills Kabanga had its own peculiar charm.

It was at one of the vacant houses at Kabanga that Georgia had an encounter with a spitting cobra which entered a room



A typical village school house, this one is constructed of unburned bricks with a pole and grass-thatched roof. The pupils may have reading and exercise books or slates. Some can afford pencils and paper. These students may be doing their arithmetic on the ground. This does not dull their interest in learning or prevent good work from being done.

where her baby was sleeping on a pallet on the floor. When Georgia went in to rescue the baby the cobra spat in her eye. It was painful, but Mrs. Rowe rinsed out the eye with milk and by the next day Georgia was again able to see.

On a trip into the villages with his father and his brother Paul, David reported seeing a large decorated rock shaped like an egg which had been cut in half, that is, oval with a flat surface on which it stood. They brought their vehicle to a halt and asked the Africans traveling with them, "What is that?" They were told that the rock had great power. "If you should pick it up and place



Alvin says good-bye to his three children as he and two helpers start on their journey to the villages. Necessary camping equipment is carefully planned for a stay of several days. The front part of Mrs. Rowe's house on right. About 1946.

it in your truck, the truck would not start," the African said.

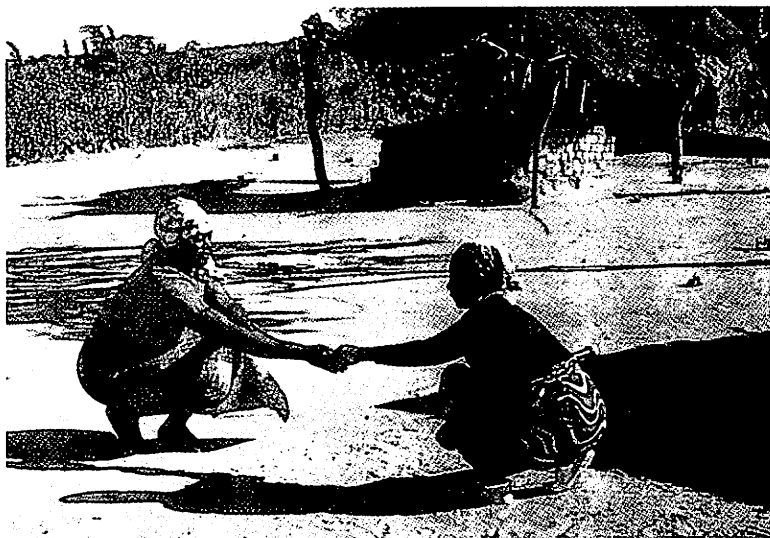
Lack of knowledge as to modes of thinking and modes of life of the people he is working with has been a serious handicap to every missionary. Even after living among them for many years, many of their animistic beliefs and practices remain veiled to most missionaries. But there are certain practical and common-sense practices that a missionary can do from the beginning that will put him in favor with the people. He should not emphasize the differences between African people and white people. He must not belittle or act indifferent to their beliefs. He must never, never laugh at them or imply that what they have done is silly or

stupid. He must control his tongue and his anger. He must learn their rules of politeness and good etiquette — and they have many.

Animism is a view of life after death that retains their ancestors within the clan. These departed ancestors are seen as having great power. All Africans in animistic countries are affected by this belief. The missionary can teach that God has more power than spirits of the dead, and more power than the greatly feared witch or sorcerer.



Alvin's camp in the village. The people built the grass enclosure for him and supplied him with long grass to make a bed. Mr. Merritt taught Alvin how to place the grass so it would fit his body and make a comfortable bed. Note the mosquito net, the kettle for boiling drinking water, and the canvas water bag where the water was cooled. The smell of newly cut grass for a bed is one of the fond memories of Africa.



African women greeting each other at Sindowe Village. July, 1975.

Speaking of Jesus, the writer to the Hebrews says: *“Since the children have flesh and blood, he too shared in their humanity, so that by his death he might destroy him who holds the power of death — that is, the devil — and free those who all their lives were held in slavery by their fear of death”* (Hebrews 2:14,15).

It is not effective or convincing to tell the African people that these beings of the spirit world do not exist. They should be taught that God is more powerful and that Jesus came to free them from the hold of these spirits. They can understand and believe that.

Chapter 7

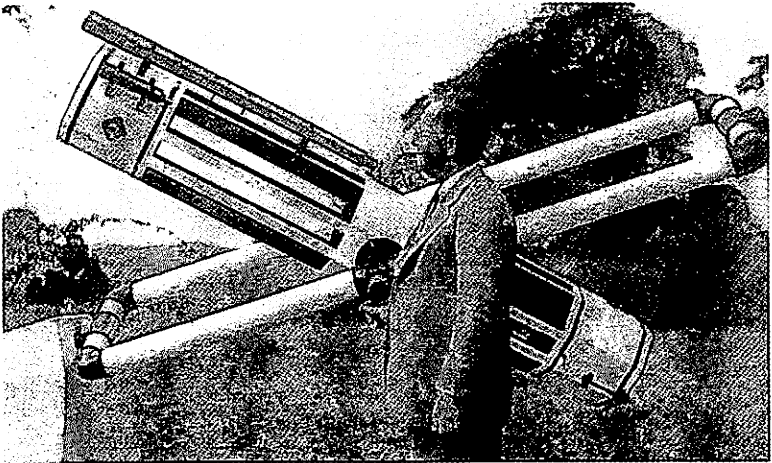
“The Magic Pipe”

And “magic pipe” it was! When Alvin completed his six-inch reflecting telescope in 1942, he allowed one of his students to look through it to see a fellow student some fifty yards away. “Witchcraft!” the student thought. He backed away quickly. “Ha! This thing is no good!”

Five years later, when Alvin visited Canada, he was given two thick 10” diameter slabs of pyrex glass. A fellow astronomer was challenging Alvin to grind a 10” mirror for a reflecting telescope. No easy task! And Alvin had not much spare time, but he did not forget. After a few years a barrel filled with sand, to weight it solidly to the concrete floor, appeared in his office. Over the next four years whenever he had a little spare time he could be seen walking round and round the barrel, his hands poised with just the correct pressure upon the glass, so that the fine grit between the two pieces of glass would gradually grind away the surface, shaping the “tool” into a convex shape and the piece that would eventually be the telescope mirror into a concave contour.

Sometimes months would pass when there was no time found to do any work on the telescope, and Alvin wondered whether it would ever be completed.

Alvin was determined that the mirror be ground perfectly so that the view of the heavenly bodies not be distorted. This required repeated testing and regrinding. One method of testing involved the use of a lighted candle. Another method was to remove the cover from a flashlight bulb and view the dim light of the flashlight from a distance of one mile. If the contour of the



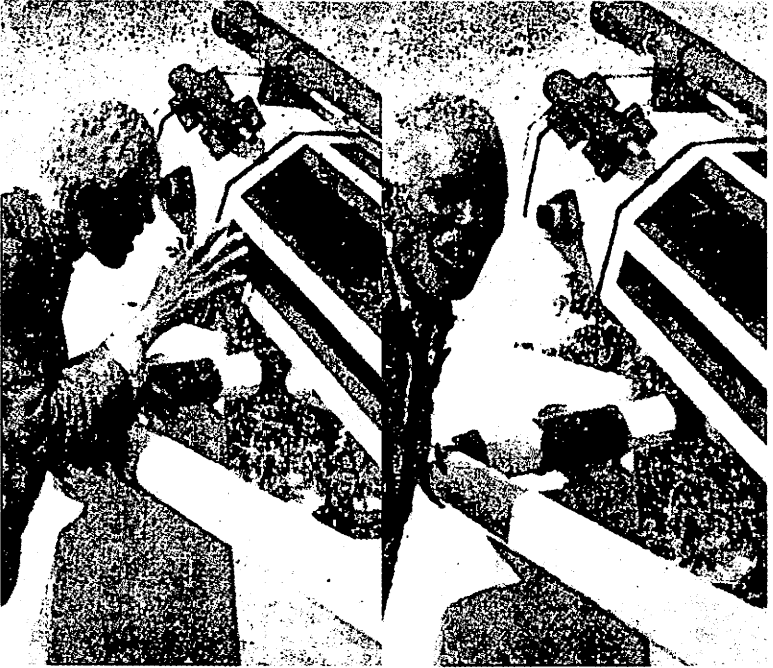
Alvin Hobby and the ten-inch reflecting telescope which he made, including the grinding, polishing and silvering of the mirror.

mirror was perfect the flashlight bulb could be clearly visible.

Sometimes there were unforeseen complications; an inquisitive child touched the mirror and marred the perfection. More grinding required.

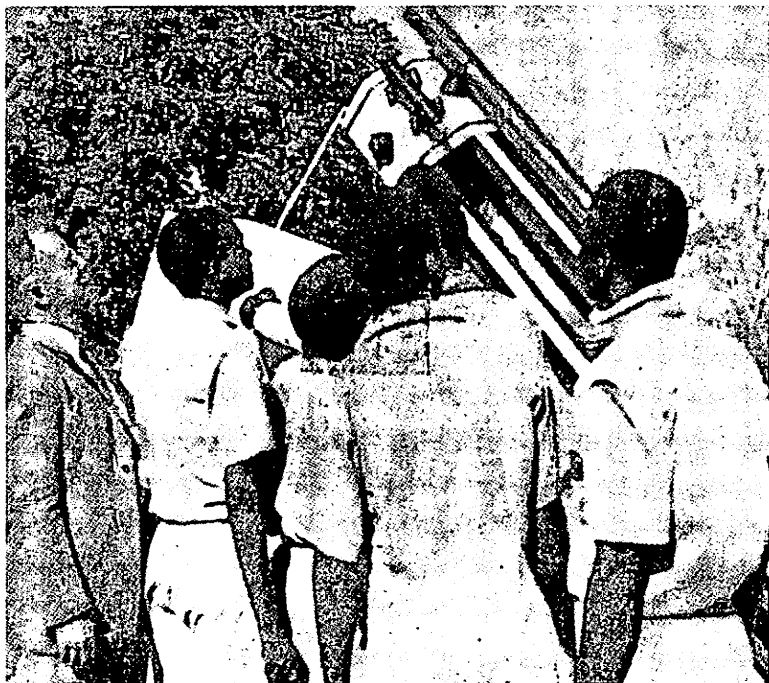
After the grinding came the silvering which was done according to the instructions in Alvin's telescope manual. Chemicals were mixed in such a manner that silver was precipitated upon the glass. Finally the silver coating was dry and the mirror completed to Alvin's satisfaction. He picked up a bar of soap to wash it, and a grain of sand imbedded in the soap produced a scratch! This could not be corrected, but the reduction of reflected light caused by the scratch was minimal. Work on the mirror was begun in 1953 and the telescope was completed in 1958.

The mirror of the telescope was capable of magnifying 500 or 600 times — making the moon seem 600 times nearer than it really was. But usually a magnification of 160 times was used for the moon and planets. In the quiet of the African plains, when the atmosphere was undisturbed, hundreds of craters, mountain ranges, peaks and hills were visible on the moon. There were no artificial lights to dim the brightness. Viewers saw several of the cloud bands of Jupiter and two of the rings and some of the bands of Saturn, as well as some surface markings and polar ice caps of Mars.

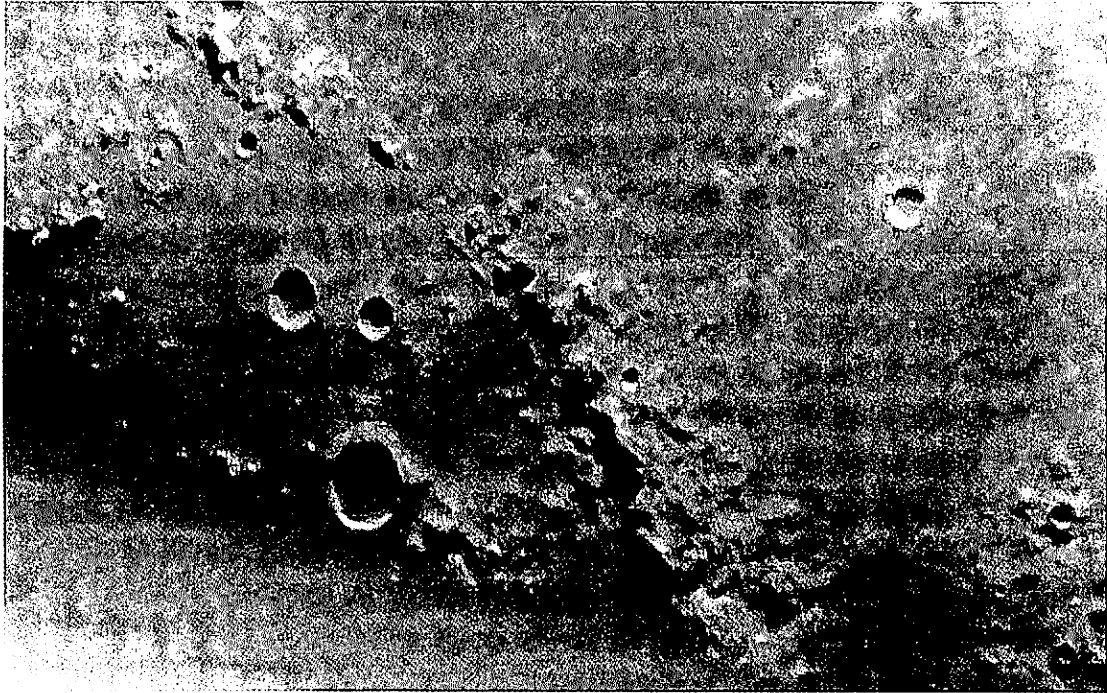


Offisi is amazed! Which of the wonders of the heavens did he see?

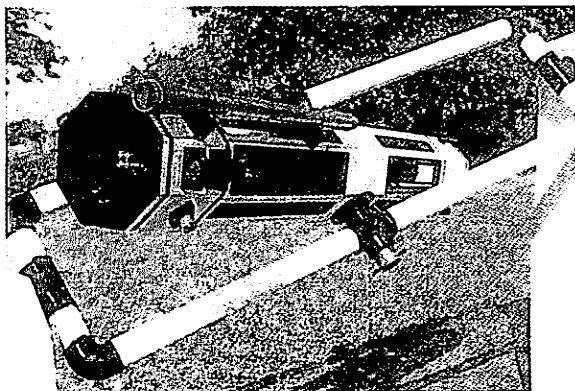
The concrete mounted telescope was the pride of the mission station and Africans, especially science classes, came from miles around to peer into the “magic pipe” and went away marvelling.



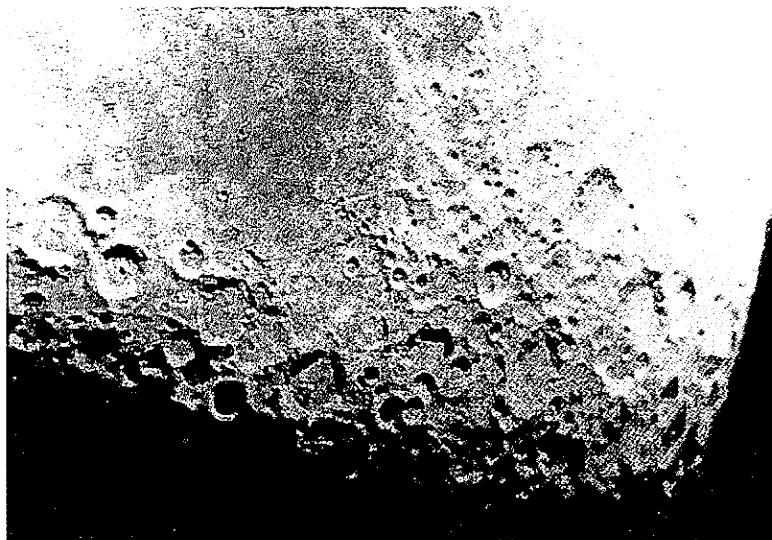
Alvin explains the telescope to the students before they look through it. There were few telescopes in Central Africa, and this was the largest.



This photo shows mountains and craters on the moon. Taken by Alvin Hobby through his ten-inch reflecting telescope, Monday, October 20, 1958, about 8 p.m. Enlarging lens $3\frac{3}{5}X$, exposure $\frac{1}{5}$ second.



Another view of the telescope, showing the viewing lens (eyepiece) and two small finder scopes which help to locate objects at low power before examining details at high power. Interchangeable eye pieces provide a range of magnifications.



A view of the moon photographed through the telescope.

Chapter 8

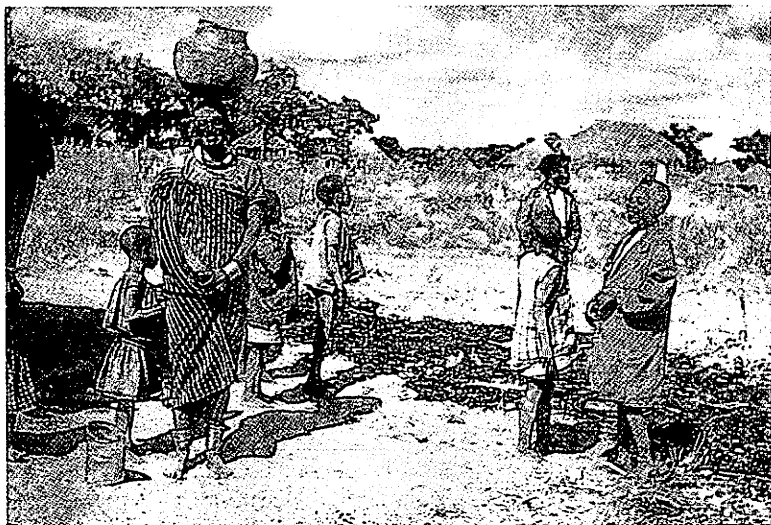
The Need for Friends in the African Villages

Village people are friendly, hospitable, generous and kind. It was a delight when the dry season came, the school year ended, and Alvin could pack bicycles for himself and his helpers and head for the villages. There is an exhilaration about the feel of the cool, dry air and the ever-blue skies of the dry season that has to be experienced to be understood.

With the harvest completed it is a leisurely time in the villages, especially for the men, and so Alvin and his helpers were able to visit, teach and inspect the village schools. Sometimes the sunlight projector was set up in the school house so that the vil-



Alvin and African men visiting around a campfire. August, 1969.



An African woman is able to walk gracefully, carrying a large clay pot of water on her head and a baby in a sling on her back. 1953.

lage people could view the film strips. In the evening around a camp fire, they sang and prayed together and studied lessons from God's Word.

Because Zambia is on a high plateau the air can become quite chilly once the sun is down. Alvin and his helpers camped in the open at night, and on a few occasions found frost on their beds the next morning.

Many years later Alvin bought a four-wheel drive Land Rover for making village trips. This made it possible for Georgia to accompany him and to visit with the women and girls in the villages.

The sturdy Land Rover could go almost anywhere and



The Land Rover as seen through tall grass. July, 1975.

remote villages were visited. The people were happy for Alvin and Georgia to come because it brought excitement, entertainment and treatment for their various ailments.

There was protocol to be observed, however. The Land Rover was stopped near the edge of the village and Alvin waited to be recognized by the elders who, moving in their dignified and unhurried way, finally came to give them warm greetings. Women and children followed.

The elders suggested a shady spot where the vehicle might be parked, and the children were dispatched to find water and firewood for their guests. The children were always rewarded.

The sun was usually getting low by this time. The village cattle had been grazing on dry grass and corn stalks, but now the



Women pounding corn in mortars, then winnowing and sifting it to make the meal used in cooking "insima", their staple food. 1953.

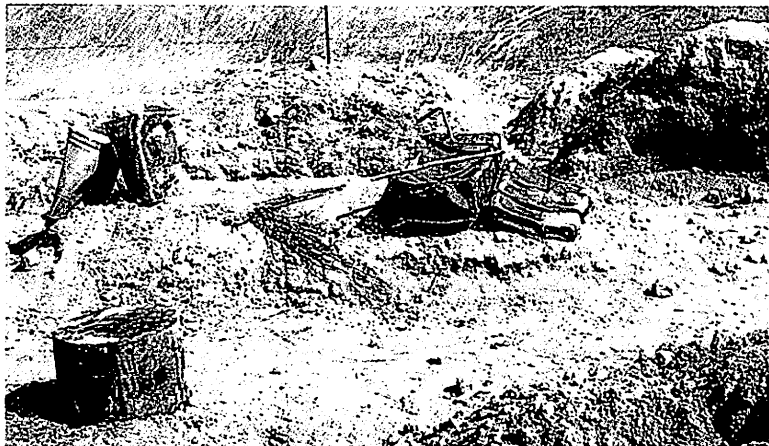
herd boys were driving them into nearby kraals. The people were going about their evening tasks and the only sounds were the distant, soft chatter of the people, an occasional squawk from a chicken, or the bark of a dog and the soft jostling and lowing of the cattle. A few children still stood around the white people's camp to watch. It was the best entertainment to be had!

Georgia and Alvin and their helpers who had travelled with them cooked their stiff corn meal mush over an open fire, and with a few beans, or greens, or meat stew in which to dip their balls of mush, enjoyed a satisfying meal.

The tailgate of the Land Rover, which had served as a buffet, now became a stand for holding the slide projector. Three camp



Women carrying water from the river for use in a women's retreat.
April, 1982.



A cemetery. Graves are marked with the deceased's suitcase, cooking utensil, or other recognized possession which has been rendered useless to discourage theft. September, 1972.



Women with nets for seining fish. June, 1960.



Baby Timothy and his mother. This young woman was very ill when Alvin and Georgia visited her village for the first time. What to do? Suppose they treated her and she died! They did the best they could by treating for both malaria and an infection. She recovered. August, 1970.

fires were built, one for men, one for women, and one for children, because after the sun had set, the air in this rather high altitude became quite chilly and the people, especially the children, had few clothes.

When darkness set in and the people had finished their evening meal they gradually seated themselves around their respective fires to see the Bible pictures that Muluti would tell them about and which they would discuss among themselves. There were songs, prayers and speeches. Sometimes the meetings were long and Alvin and Georgia were very weary when at



“Cikombelo ca Kristo” means “Church of Christ”. This is Mwiinga church house, a neat job of construction by the Christians. Alvin hauled in his Land Rover the clay which was used for plastering the walls and floor. Sometimes manure is mixed with clay for the floor. It results in a hard, more durable floor covering.

last the mattress was lowered to the floor of the Land Rover. One last duty though — to make coffee and fill the thermos so that in the morning breakfast could be eaten inside the Land Rover, for as soon as they emerged a busy day began, visiting with the people and treating those in need of medical services.

The Seasons

Life in the villages is dictated by the two seasons — the wet and the dry. Rains may start in October. There is a noticeable change — the smell of rain, the arrival of the rain birds — large black and white storks from Europe, and the noisy parrots.

But plowing and planting of crops usually wait until the rains are more predictable and the soil is softer. This may be November or December.

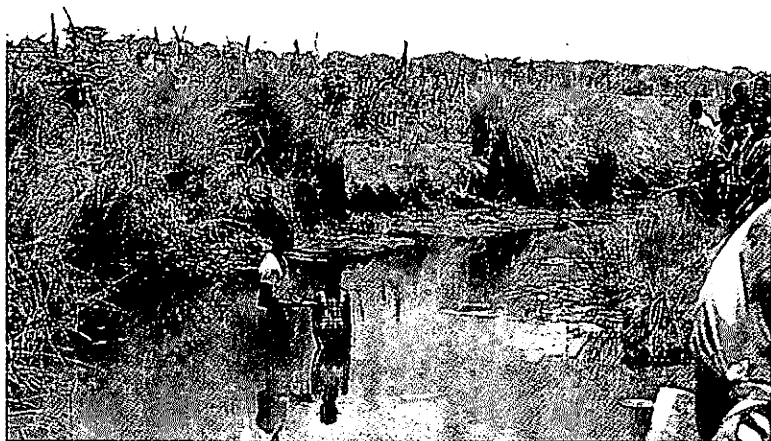
In December there was a long school break to allow the young people time to return to their villages and help with planting. They returned to school the first of the year and school continued until April or May when the dry cool season had come again. The students arrived home in time to help with the harvest of corn, pumpkins and sweet potatoes.

August is springtime. Although not a drop of rain has fallen since March or April, winter is past and the trees suddenly start to dress themselves in fresh new leaves of red, yellow, brown and soft greens. It is the most colorful time of the year in the forest.

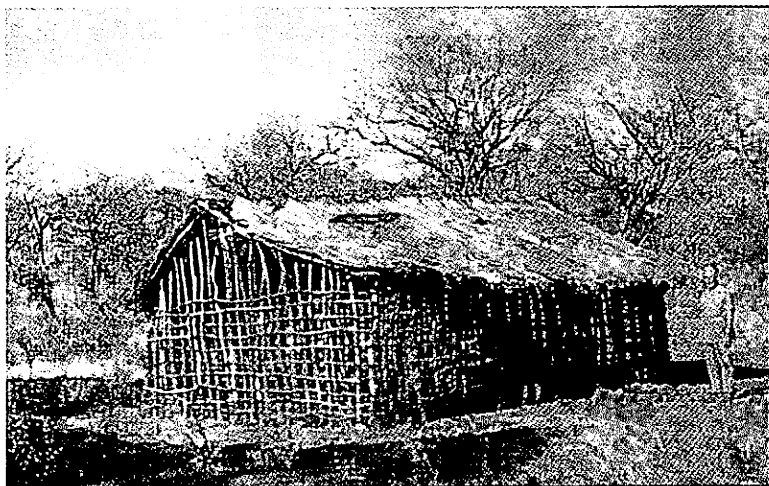
Gradually now the days become warmer until they reach their peak of heat in October. This is sometimes called the “suicide month” because it is often so hot and dry that people may do silly things out of desperation. The sky is watched longingly for the first signs of rain clouds, and there is great rejoicing when the

first rain falls after six months of drought. Almost over-night, it seems, the whole land turns green, the people find wild greens for themselves, and the starving cattle begin to fatten.

The wet season is a busy time for the village people for they have a very short time to plant and tend their crops. Because of bad roads, mosquitoes, and the occupation of the people, it is not a good time for missionaries to visit. This time is more profitably spent operating schools.



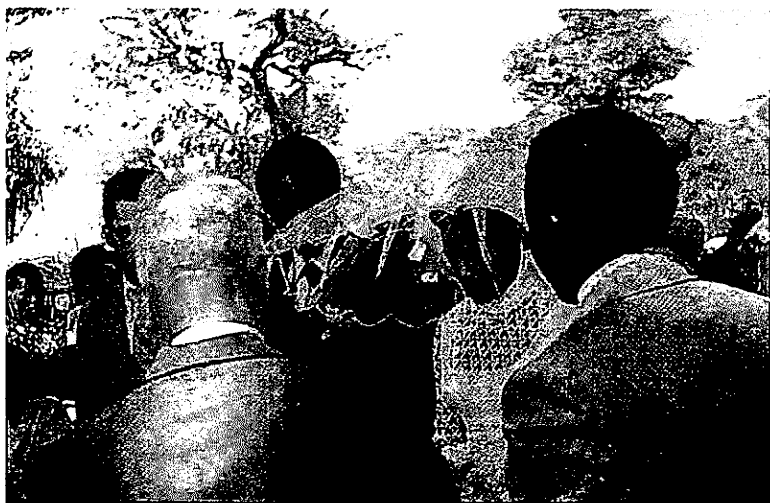
A baptism. Children on the right wait to witness the baptism. On the left, wild grass grows on the river bank. Just beyond the grass, a winter garden has been fenced with brush and the grass cleared to make a path so as to obtain water for the garden.



Alvin stands near Siandubu church building, which appears to be unfinished. Mud plaster will probably be laid over the sticks.



Alvin waits at the altar for the bride and groom. September, 1975.



The wedding ceremony, using an interpreter who stands on Alvin's right. Roy Merritt as best man stands to the right of the groom. The Batonga people consider it inappropriate for the bride to smile at her wedding.



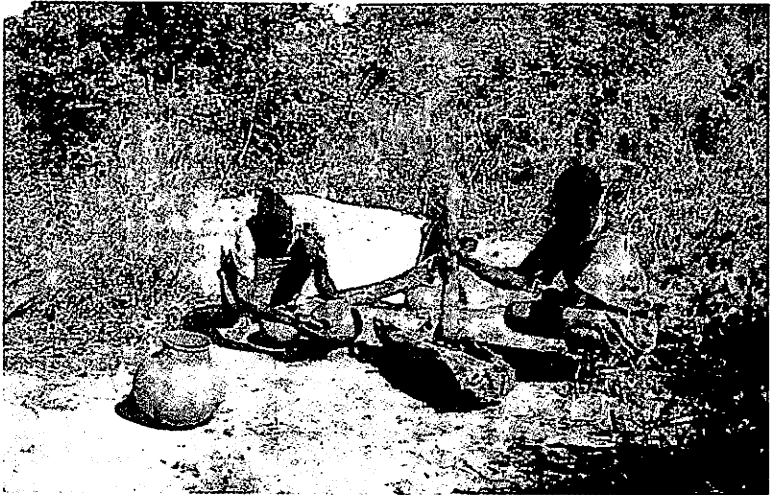
Sleigh made of corn stalks, pulled by oxen.



A fish trap made of twigs, held up by African teachers.



Building a grain storage house.



Moulding and smoothing clay pots. The man on the right is mixing clay and water together in a mortar made from a hollow log. After the pots are dry, they will be decorated and fired.



Two clay jars used for storing grain. In the background to the left stands a grain-storage house, built on stilts.

Chapter 9

A Trip into "Darkest Africa"

Alvin wrote: "A trip made together with a group of our African missionaries in June, 1948, will give some idea of what I consider my first real introduction to 'Darkest Africa,' although I had been in the country since 1938."

This trip was to take the men into the "Zambezi Valley" which is across the hills from Kabanga Mission, toward the Zambezi River. They expected the trip to last for three or four weeks and since there were no accommodations, shops or hospitals in the area, it was necessary to plan carefully in order to have food, medicine, guns, ammunition, tools, gasoline, oil, repair kits and other necessities.

Final preparations included tying up bed rolls, packing provisions, clothing, medicines, collecting axes and shovels and loading all of this into Orville Brittell's truck with cans of gasoline and sacks of corn meal.

When the group finally set out, four of the men and some African helpers rode with Orville Brittell on his truck. Some of the helpers travelled by bicycle, while Alvin and J. C. Shewmaker followed on their bicycles which had motors attached.

Before they reached the Valley they learned that there was an epidemic of smallpox where they were going. It was decided then to send one of the students back to Kalomo by bicycle, and on to Choma by train to bring serum for inoculating the people. Chief Simwatacela asked the men not to return from the Valley via his territory lest they bring the disease back to his people.



Alvin standing near a termite mound.

After passing Kabanga Mission the men were about sixty miles from the railway line and from Namwianga Mission whence they had set out. For better or for worse, they were now entering uncharted country where there were no roads — the adventure had begun! The old truck and the bicycles bounded over rocks and through gullies and often came to a standstill while rocks were pushed aside and termite mounds leveled to allow the truck to pass between the trees.

At the Sizambo River, the river bed was a boggy marsh. Everyone cut and carried poles and reeds to make the crossing. The truck was unloaded to relieve it of its weight, and with everyone pushing and shouting, Orville stepped on the gas and the truck finally climbed the bank on the other side, much to the relief of all.

The following day found them in elephant country made evi-

dent by piles of elephant dung and large trees which had been pushed over by the elephants. It seems that elephants push down trees just for the joy of pushing. The African men reported that if an elephant tackles a tree that proves too much for him, one of his fellow elephants will come and help until the tree is finally pushed down.

It was clear to the men that it would be useless to climb trees to try to escape elephants. They learned from the village people that there were twenty-five or thirty elephants in the community. Except for an occasional flapping of their ears to rid themselves of flies the herd stood motionless under a clump of trees during daylight hours, then raided the people's gardens at night.

Some of the people reported that there were also lions in the country, and the men reflected upon their vulnerability with their "beds" on the ground in open country.

In the village in the evening the men sang and prayed with the people and showed illustrated Bible lessons, using a 110 volt light generator, a projector and a screen. Nothing resembling this had ever come to these villages before, so attention was good and many lasting impressions were made. The people pointed to the pictures and spoke to each other about what they saw, indicating that they were able to interpret most of what they saw on the screen.

After the service Foy and Eldred took their guns and a spot light and went to an old garden by the river, thinking that they might find a buck, shine its eyes and shoot it. When they arrived at the old garden they could hear noises among the dry corn stalks, evidently some kind of animal (or animals) tramping about and eating. But no eyes could be seen. Was it cattle? Or

possibly elephants! Since one dare not shoot an elephant in the dark, they beat a hasty and orderly retreat back to the camp. (At least they said so!)

Thoughts of what would happen if elephants decided to visit their camp and perhaps walk through the middle of it were uppermost on the minds of the men as weariness gave way finally to sleep.

Early the next morning J. C. Shewmaker and Stanford, his son, took their guns and went to an old garden site to try to find a small buck. A short distance from their camp they saw the spoor of a large bull elephant which, from all indications, had passed there about daylight. The elephant had come from the direction of the garden where Foy and Eldred had been the night before. Mr. Shewmaker stepped the distance from the camp to where the elephant passed and found it to be twenty-nine steps.

Alvin reported: "Eldred Echols has become the official cook of the group; and he seems to be able to prepare tasty dishes from whatever materials he may have at hand. One evening we had cassava pudding and sauce made from the wild fruit called "incipas" found in the forest. It was all 'fit for a king'."

The men again met with the village people in the evening and showed projected pictures on a screen. The next morning was the Lord's day. The people gathered under the shade of some large trees near the edge of the village. Most of the people sat on the ground but they provided stools for their visitors. The largest stool, about a foot high, was used as a table for the Lord's Supper. Alvin spoke to the people.

It was noon before the men left the village to continue their



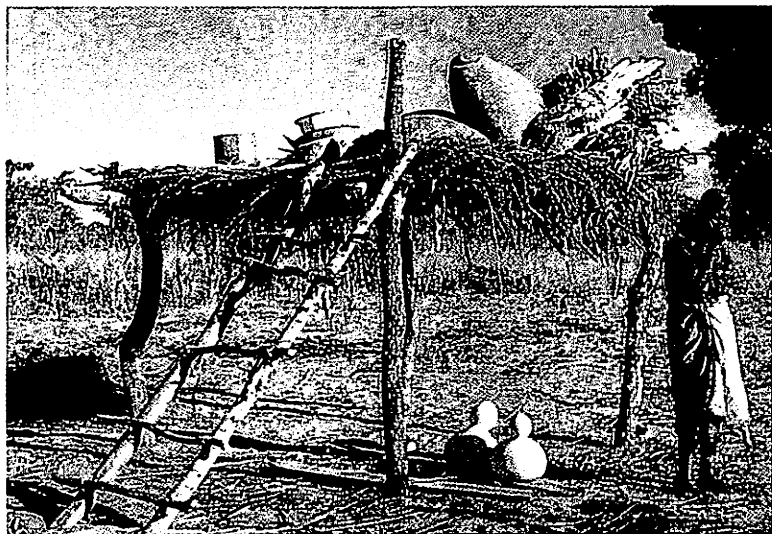
The woman is able to carry the clay pot and its contents, only occasionally touching it with her hand. The baby is safe and comfortable.

journey.

After leaving the “Avenue of the Elephants” the main difficulty was found in making three river crossings. The first was nothing more than a huge gully, but for the truck to cross, both banks had to be dug off and the bottom filled in. Then with much shouting and pushing the crossing was made.

The next place was the dry bed of a stream about 75 feet wide with a lot of large rocks and loose sand in it. The rocky part was made crossable by filling in some holes with small rocks and gravel. The sand was covered with branches of trees so that the wheels of the truck would not sink into it.

While they were busy getting the truck across and up the



A rack for drying and storing grain. Two gourds sit on the ground under the rack. The woman is wearing the accepted "citenge skirt" — a length of cloth which wraps around and tucks in at the waist.

opposite bank, there was a crashing sound in the bush nearby and they all hurried out into the open expecting to see a rapidly retreating elephant. It was only a frightened cow!

The third crossing near a village was not very wide but the banks on both sides were steep. These had to be dug off and reeds cut and put onto the sandy places.

The men arrived at Bangalali Village about 4:00 P.M. The old headman of the village came out to greet them. In the evening the village people enjoyed the illustrated Bible lesson.

Wherever they went the village people received baptism if they requested it, treatment for their illnesses and inoculations



The large tree is a baobab. The smaller tree is probably a mango.

against smallpox if they wished it. At this village four girls requested and received baptism.

After the baptismal service the men left Bangalali Village. About five miles from the village, the truck came to a halt at a gully which was eight feet wide and six feet deep. How to cross? All they had to do was build a bridge! And so they set to, to cut poles and to tie them together with bark string until the truck could cross.

At other times it was necessary to cut trees to clear a road for the truck. After a time the trail descended sharply into a gorge or canyon. By using double-low gear and the brakes the truck descended successfully. In the canyon they found water — a good place to make camp. But the rocks! There was no place to spread sleeping bags for sleep. Picks and shovels solved that problem.

The country appeared different now in this lower elevation. The vegetation was more tropical, thicker and greener. On down into a valley they found an old man and his wife harvesting a crop. This couple pointed the way to a village which was a mile or two farther on.

Alvin writes: "I will never forget the feeling that came over me as we approached this village. Crossing the hills from the Africa that we knew was like going through a door into the past, as it was hundreds of years ago. Here was the 'Darkest Africa' we had ever seen. And perhaps the fact that the sun was setting and the shades of night were coming on added to the gloom of the general situation.

"At first the village seemed to be deserted. We stood for awhile looking at the huts in their squalid surroundings. The

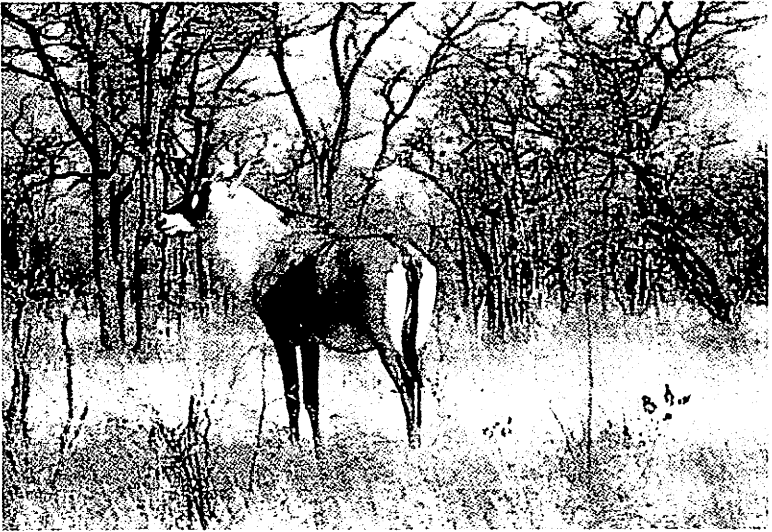
goat houses, made of poles and in the form of tepees, were just at the edge of the village. And next to them were the cattle kraals made of long poles with the tops leaning outward so as to make it difficult for lions to enter.

“While we were standing and looking at the village there were no doubt several pairs of eyes peering out from the dark interiors of some of the huts, scrutinizing us even more closely than we were the village. After a while the headman came out clad in nothing but a loin cloth and greeted us. Then two young men came out dressed in dirty looking shirts and with feathers in their hair. They were reserved and acted as if they would have been about as happy if we had not come.

“However, we had come and there was nothing to do but make the most of it. Perhaps this required about as much effort for us as it did for them. The truck arrived and we were shown where the water hole was, so we decided to camp between it and the village. It was nearly dark and we made out ‘beds’ on the bare ground, because grass was scarce.”

After camp was set up the next concern of the men was for food. They asked at the village if they might buy a sheep, but the people were not interested in selling their food. Why should they be? Food was food and what could they do with money?

Earlier in the evening, perhaps four miles back, the travelers had come across a dead Kudu antelope. It had just been killed, presumably in a fight with another Kudu bull. It was a hard decision to make but it seemed that there was nothing else to do but to unload the truck, and with lanterns and flashlights return and



Roan Antelope

try to find the animal. This would be difficult after dark.

When at last the animal was located, it was found that it had bled on the inside and that the meat was in fair condition.

When the sun came up the next morning and flooded the valley with sunlight the men felt more cheerful than they had at dusk the evening before. There had been a change in the village people, too. Whereas they had been reluctant to part with their food, they came now dressed in their best, and bearing pumpkins, milk and a sheep to trade for Kudu meat! This made sense. Kudu meat could be eaten. But money?

The men from the village wore clothing which was reserved for special occasions — two pieces of cloth, one red and one

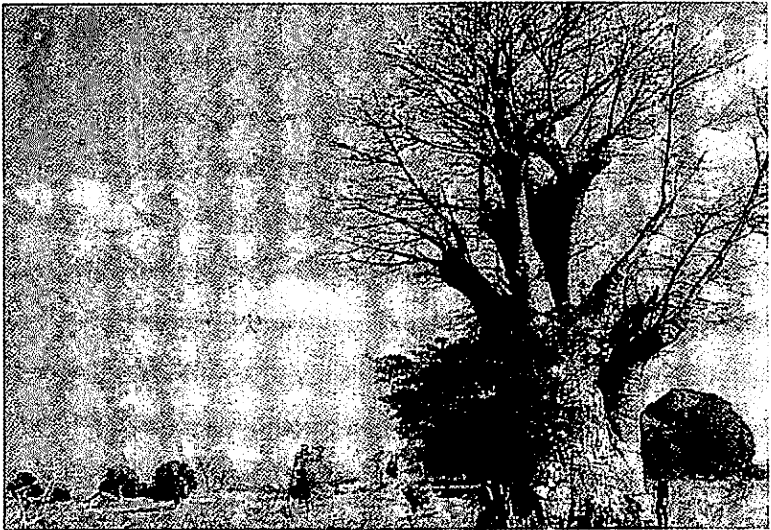
blue, about a yard long and a foot wide tied around the waist and covering the hips, and another about four feet long and a foot wide used as a loin cloth. The women wore two small aprons, one in the back and one in the front and that was all, except for beads around the waist or neck, and a piece of bone about four inches long through the nose. The small children were unencumbered with clothing.

On to the next village which appeared to be deserted but people slowly emerged and when they ascertained that these were missionaries and not tax collectors, they were friendly. In the evening they listened attentively as the men sang and preached to them.

While they were camped at this village Stanford Shewmaker ran excitedly into the camp. He had seen a large mamba snake nearby, near the path to the people's water hole. He was carrying his .22 rifle, but was afraid to shoot it lest he merely wound the snake and it attack him. In this he acted wisely, because it is reported that these snakes can outrun a horse, and they are deadly poisonous. A bite can kill a person in fifteen minutes.

Some of the men took their guns, and accompanied by village men whose sharp eyes can easily spot a snake where white men fail, found and shot the black mamba. The shot was not fatal and the snake crawled into a hole in a large tree nearby. The Africans predicted that it would later come out of the hole and die, which is what happened. The people rejoiced that the snake was dead because it had been terrifying the women who made daily trips to the water hole.

Early the next morning, June 12, some of the men set off on bicycles to explore the road to Nyanga's Village via Siameja.



The baobab tree dwarfs Alvin who stands to the left of it.

They found that in places there were so many elephant tracks made during the rains and dried hard now that bicycles could not be ridden. In other places there were so many rocks that the bicycles had to be carried. So where to now? A vehicle without wings could not negotiate the road to Nyanga. It would be impossible for the truck to return by the way it had come. They could not hope to go to the Zambezi River and then follow along the banks to Kanchindu because the river was high and the water backed up into the little tributaries, making the water at the crossings too deep for the truck. The Africans reported also that at some of the streams there were high cliffs of rock.

Thinking of all the alternatives caused the men to recall the drunk man who, when someone asked which way to the court

house replied, "There just ain't no road to the court house."

The stranded men began to think longingly of home. Since Alvin and Mr. Shewmaker had bicycles with motors they felt that they could find a way out, but they disliked the idea of turning back and leaving the rest of the group, so they remained with them.

There was a feeling of depression and utter helplessness — not only because of the road situation, but especially because they were sitting among people for whom Christ died just as He had for themselves. They had a strong desire to share with these heathen people the Words of Life, but could they understand by listening to one or two short sermons, which no doubt sounded foreign and strange to everything they had ever heard before? If one asked for baptism could they feel that he understood? And if some became Christians, who would teach and encourage them?

Well, they must go on — they made inquiries and finally a guide was found who could show them a path that would by-pass the rocky road they had found. They boiled water so as to have drinking water for the journey ahead. The truck was loaded, and they followed the guide on the path to Siameja's Village. When they came to some large baobab trees, the guide directed them to turn toward an old river bed and follow one of the many elephant trails. Here they saw many elephant tracks, some 16" in diameter. Toward dusk they stopped in the elephant trail and pitched camp.

The next morning someone noticed a honey bird, which indicated that there was honey near. These birds, about the size of a small sparrow, are known to lead people to honey so that when the honey is found and exposed, the honey bird can share with the

people in the find. Sure enough, the tiny bird led them to a hive of bees in a baobab tree not more than forty yards from their camp. Only a small amount of honey was taken because it was too high in the tree for them to reach it.

Day by day the journey continued, cutting down trees, removing rocks, filling holes, placing tree branches over sandy river beds, pushing and pulling.

One evening two of the men decided that they would like to see the elephants, so with an African guide they went to have a look. They were not disappointed. Sounds could be heard on three sides of them, where the elephants were breaking branches from the trees. Then they sighted a big bull elephant! The elephant also sensed them. He was holding his trunk straight out, trying to catch their scent and was waving his big ears back and forth. The guide, to make sure, picked up a bit of dust and allowed it to run through his fingers to check the movement of the air. Sure enough, it was moving in the direction of the elephant so that their scent was being carried toward it. They lost no time. The guide said, "we stink," meaning "the elephant smells us. Let's get out of here." And they did.

The Parting of the Ways

Alvin and J. C. Shewmaker had been with the company for twelve days when they decided to ride their motor bicycles to Kanchindu, hoping to reach there by noon and on to Masuku Mission, thirty-five miles from Kanchindu, by night. They would soon be home!

The path leading away from the camp looked good and one of the African guides said it was not far to Nyanga's Village. He

said they should just follow the main path down to the river, up, across the ridge and down to Nyanga's. So they set out in high spirits, accompanied by John Scott, an African, who had a bicycle.

But they had not gone far when their hopes of making good time were blasted. There were the usual impediments to progress — rocks, trees and brush across the path. Elephant paths went in all directions and when they reached the river bed the main path disappeared. They were lost! After navigating by intuition for a mile or two, John heard a most welcome sound — the crow of a rooster, which told them that a village was near. After passing the village they were in the hills where the path was too steep and rocky to ride bicycles. They had to push or carry them.



Lubaya Village Scene, 1960.

In the afternoon they came to some gardens and decided to camp there. The people gave them meal and the men bought a chicken and some eggs. The headman and his wife lent them a cooking pot. Supper without salt is O.K. if one is hungry, and sleeping on the ground without blankets can be done, too, if one is tired. As long as they could keep a fire burning they could sleep a bit, but this required repeated stoking of the fire during the night.

There had been a death in the nearby village and all night long the flutes, which had been fashioned from small animal horns, kept up an unharmonious din.

After two hours of sleep Alvin and Mr. Shewmaker were not prepared for the next day. Mountains covered with huge boulders made it necessary to carry their bikes more than they rode them, or to roll the huge rocks to the sides so the bikes could be pushed through. It was near noon when they reached the Zambezi River where the rocks ended and the sand began. Then on to Kanchindu where they hoped that their troubles were over, because it was supposed that there was a motor road from Kanchindu to Masuku Mission and to Choma. The teacher at Kanchindu helped them by taking them across the Zambezi River in a huge dugout canoe. He warned the men that they could not reach Masuku Mission by night, and gave them the names of villages where they might spend the night.

Tire punctures and engine trouble slowed their progress and after fifteen miles of travel, they decided to make camp at Siatwiinda's Village. Here the headman brought them new blankets from his store so they might sleep comfortably.

Alvin and Mr. Shewmaker had been told that it was not far to

Masuku Mission and it was this hope that kept them going. But sometimes the African people think it is a kindness to tell one what they think he would like to hear. This was the fourth day of the journey that they had hoped to complete in one day, and the worst was yet to come!

Soon after leaving Siatwiinda's Village they came to a really big mountain. They had been told about a big mountain, but they thought they had already crossed it. Riding their bikes was out of the question; water and food were nearly gone and they did not know where they could find more.

When they reached the top of the first high mountain they had a lovely view back to the south, the way they had come. They could see across the Zambezi River and the "Valley" and into the hills of Southern Rhodesia on the other side, perhaps sixty miles away. But they did not tarry long. Their thoughts were on the hills ahead — and water!

Down one hill and up another they travelled in a seemingly endless procession! They pushed on for hours hot, exhausted, and thirsty. A river bed did not yield any water. Mr. Shewmaker had another flat tire, but when it was repaired they did not have enough saliva to cover the valve stem to test for leaks.

They tried chewing bark for moisture but it was bitter and yielded little moisture. Late in the afternoon John saved the day when he found moist sand in a river bed, dug for water and found it! Water had never looked so good, they all drank their fill and filled their water bags.

At dark the men searched for wood to build fires. This would help to keep them warm and keep away lions and leopards. There was no fear of elephants now. The elephants had better

sense than to come to this part of the country.

Friday, June 18, found them thankful to be able to stand up and to try again to reach Masuku Mission. They had no food but they were thankful to have water.

At first it was down one hill and up another, but then they began to see Masuku trees near the road, and this gave them hopes that they were near Masuku Mission.

John reached the mission first. He said he had gone as far as he could and he lay down to sleep by the side of the road, saying that he felt as if he were recuperating from some long illness. But he had only pushed a bicycle across the hills, not a motor bicycle!

At Masuku Mission the missionaries were kind to the travellers and understood their plight. They offered them food, but the men were unable to eat because they had been without food for so long.

They learned from Mr. Foster, the missionary at Masuku Mission, that from Kanchindu to Masuku was fifty-two miles instead of thirty-five, and the distance across those endless torturous hills was twenty-two miles. So they had traveled seventy-four miles since they parted from their company.

The travellers gratefully accepted a rest on a real bed before they departed on their bicycles for Choma, thirty-five miles away, to wait for a train to Kalomo. Alvin writes, "There were no hills and no rocks; and we could ride, and ride, and ride. We felt as free as two birds just let out of a cage!" From Choma, they rode the train forty miles to Kalomo, which was only three miles from **home!**

About a week later the truck returned with the remainder of the party, who were also totally exhausted. They all agreed that the next trip into the Zambezi Valley would be by foot, pack donkeys or helicopter — never again by truck or bicycle!

Chapter 10

The Need for Family Life
The Education of One's Own
Children

Alvin's children were his delight. He loved all children, but his own were special. He had a child-like nature himself — quiet, unassuming, gentle and content with what he had in material possessions. And so his spirit was in harmony with theirs. In his later years he expressed regret that he had allotted too much time to his work and not enough to his children. But he had only answered to the demands of a never-ending work. Any lack of attention to his family did not reflect lack of interest in them.

He built the baby crib that cradled the first four — David,



Alvin with a contented child. The Hobbys and Mrs. Myrtle Rowe have identical houses. Hobby's home is right. 1941.

Paul, George and Anita. On the front bar of his bicycle he tied securely a thick roll of blanket where the child sat for bicycle rides.

When their first child reached school age, Alvin and Georgia began home school, using correspondence lessons supplied by the government of Southern Rhodesia. Long, brown envelopes came in the mail with rigid expectations as to how the lessons should be done. Such perfection was required that adult participation was necessary to complete the lessons to the satisfaction of the "teacher" in Salisbury. It is not known how this experiment in educating children would have turned out. The Shewmakers and the Shorts also had school age children, and



Alvin, Georgia and their children. December, 1950.



Left to right: Kenneth, Anita, George, Paul, David.



Anita the nurse, present and future, in her uniform.



Georgia with George, Paul and David.

they opened a primary school for the mission children, called "Eureka School".

Alvin taught French to some of the older children in Eureka School. Georgia taught full time and J. C. Shewmaker was principal of the school. Why didn't these children attend the African school? Because in the lower grades the African children were taught in the Tonga language.

Gradually the school grew as other mission children were added. Children of white farmers in the community were invited to attend Eureka School, and so it became a boarding school for white children with an enrollment of fifty. The Northern Rhodesia government paid partial salary for some of the teachers and a new classroom block was built with this money, so the missionary children were able to live at home through elementary school years.



Alvin has his arms full! Kenneth, Anita and George.

When the children had completed elementary education they were outfitted with the prescribed school uniforms and sent away on the school train to boarding school.

The “school train” started its journey at Livingstone, the southern-most city of the Southern Province, and picked up white children all along the line of rail to Lusaka, the capitol. This is where the government boarding schools, separate schools for boys and girls, were located.

Lusaka is near the center of Northern Rhodesia (now Zambia) and three hundred miles from Kalomo where the mission children boarded the train.

Georgia and Alvin usually did not see their children again until the school train returned, dropping off children all along the way, for a brief vacation three times a year. The longest vacation was at Christmas time, and since this was in summer season, special family times together were planned. About every three years the family made a trip to the ocean at Cape Town where they boarded at the “missionary homes”, established just for the pur-

pose of accommodating missionaries and their families.

At other times the family planned to stay for a few days in the little grass-thatched huts on the banks of the Zambezi River in Northern Rhodesia where they had picnics and took boat trips to see the hippos and crocodiles in the river.

On the mission the children created their own entertainment, which was limited only by their imagination.



Alvin with David and a pet sable antelope.

Discipline at the government boarding school was rigorous, with the cane always ready, even for the smallest infractions, such as socks slipped down and shoe laces not tied. The diet was monotonous, too. Georgia baked cookies and roasted peanuts to send to their children, and when guavas or mangoes were ripe, these, too, were shipped by train.

British educational standards were high and the children received a superior high school education. After completion of high school work, they were required to sit for the "Cambridge



Alvin and Kenneth

Exam” over **all** their high school work. The exam was sent to Cambridge University in England for grading, and the students waited anxiously for the results.

Alvin and Georgia arranged for the children to return, one by one, to the United States for college when high school was completed. If it could be arranged the child travelled with a missionary family who was going to the States on furlough. Alvin’s

and Georgia’s children had been in Africa for fifteen years without a visit to relatives and friends of their parents. The USA was a foreign land and everyone in it was foreign. This setup lent itself to enormous possibilities for maladjustment.

The children understood, however, that their parents loved them and had done the only thing there was to do under the circumstances, so they found jobs to pay college expenses and “dug in” to make the best of it. Relatives and friends were generous and caring during school vacations.



Eureka School children who dramatized the story of Queen Esther.

Although the thoughts of what they endured to enable Alvin and Georgia to continue in their chosen work brought sorrow to the hearts of their parents, the hardships seasoned and matured them and enabled them to attain heights in their chosen fields which they might not have attained without the discipline.

David earned two Masters Degrees and was campus minister for many years. Today he teaches science in Birdville, Texas school.

Paul died of complications of infectious mononucleosis at age 21. He had completed three years of college work and was due to start work on a degree in electrical engineering.

George is a medical doctor and a Fellow in Family Practice.

Anita is an associate professor of nursing at Northeast Louisiana University. She teaches nursing of children and adults

and pediatric critical care nursing.

Kenneth earned his Ph. D. and is presently professor of psychology at Harding University.

The impact of our lives is so far reaching that only in eternity will God be able to make an assessment. Alvin and Georgia were encouraged by their parents in the deep depression years to attend a Christian college. There they met and married. Having seen the value of a Christian education they made every effort to see that their children were also blessed by Christian schools. Their children, in turn, sent **their** children to Christian schools where mates were found. The lives and marriages have turned out well. All thirty-four lives in Alvin's and Georgia's family have been blessed by two people, George Lester and Hazel Nutt Pruett (Georgia's parents) who, in the depression years when money and jobs were scarce, had the courage to pull up stakes **twice** and follow the Christian school.

Chapter 11

The Need for Medical Services and Namwianga Christian Secondary School

Restlessness...winds of change were blowing strongly in Africa. Alvin had served for twenty-two years as principal of Namwianga School. Some who had come into the school as beginners were now trained teachers, capable and eager to take over as principal of Namwianga School.

Soon Northern Rhodesia would become independent from its British colony status. The people were eagerly anticipating this change, too. It was time for Alvin and Georgia to consider their next move.

Their children were a deciding factor. The three oldest, David, Paul and George were already in the United States, working during the summer months and attending college the remainder of the time. Their daughter, Anita, had completed high school and was ready to enter college. Georgia had taken courses by correspondence to supplement her college degree and had earned a teaching certificate in elementary education.

Both Alvin and Georgia were interested in nursing and felt that their lives could continue to be useful in the health field, either in Northern Rhodesia or in the USA. And so it was decided that the family should return to the USA after being away with no furlough for fifteen years. This move would enable Alvin to enter nursing education, Anita to enter college, and Kenneth, the youngest, to continue in high school.

They were aware that this was a bold decision, that money was scarce; but they trusted God to help them and He certainly did.

Alvin was accepted into Texarkana, Texas Junior College's Associate Degree Nursing program — a two year program leading to becoming a registered nurse. Georgia became a sixth grade teacher at Central Elementary School in Texarkana, Arkansas. Georgia and Alvin were again working as a team in a very different setting. They were asked, "Did you experience reverse culture shock, returning to the USA after so many years abroad?" Their son, Paul, who was twenty-one years old and had been studying in the USA for three years, died in August, the same month that Georgia started teaching, and that Alvin began



The last picture made of the family before Paul's death. Alvin, Georgia, Kenneth, David, Anita, Paul and George.

his studies. That was a shock. If there were other shocks, they were so minor that they passed unnoticed.

There are many men in nursing education today but in 1962 men were few in the program. In Alvin's class there were around twenty young women, but Alvin was the only male. He was older than any of them, but they welcomed him into their class and heaped honors upon him as he studied hard and was given top honors for high grades, not only in the school of nursing, but in the entire college.

A supervisor once asked Alvin, "How do you get along with all these young women?" Alvin replied, "They tend to their business and I tend to mine and we get along fine."



Anita, Alvin and Georgia, 1967, at University Hospital, Little Rock, Arkansas. Anita and Georgia are student nurses.
Alvin is a Registered Nurse.

After graduation Alvin passed the State Board Exam and became a registered nurse. According to their agreement, Alvin worked as a staff nurse for the next three years as Georgia and their daughter, Anita, studied nursing and graduated in the same class from the University of Arkansas School of Nursing in the spring of 1967.

The following year, Alvin went the extra mile and worked as a staff nurse in Colorado General Hospital while Georgia completed work on a Master's Degree in Nursing in 1968.

Two years after Alvin left Africa, Northern Rhodesia gained its independence from Great Britain (1964). The new name of the country was "Zambia", and the new president was Kenneth Kaunda, a black man.

The new government had been in power for four years when Alvin decided that conditions were favorable to return to Namwianga Mission. During his absence a new high school for Zambians had opened and buildings were being constructed. When Alvin decided to return, a small out-patient clinic was also built so that students, staff and neighbors could receive basic medical treatment.

Alvin's three sons, David, George and Kenneth were married now and working in education and health fields. Alvin's outstanding problem was Georgia, who wished to gain some experience in her chosen field before returning to Africa. When difficult choices present themselves, the deciding factor should always be: which choice will do most to advance the Lord's work? What would the Lord have me do? Georgia decided that there were a number of reasons to choose Africa. And so, when in August Georgia graduated from the University of Colorado,

preparations were made for them to depart for Africa in October.

Journey to Africa on a Freight Boat

With four of their children to see them off, Alvin and Georgia departed from Beaumont, Texas on October 13, 1968, sailed along the Neches River and into the Gulf of Mexico. There were three other passengers on the *James McKay*, the same boat that had brought George to the USA in 1959.

At first the sea was glassy smooth and sailing was a pleasant experience. The passengers enjoyed the birds that followed the ship, the two tiny colorful birds that were stowaways, and the flying fish in the water.

From the Gulf of Mexico, the boat sailed into the Caribbean Sea and into the path of a hurricane. The captain reduced the speed, allowing the hurricane to pass.

After normal speed was resumed they sighted a lighthouse on the island of Cuba ten miles away. The captain pointed out on a map their path through the Caribbean Sea and the first mate showed them on radar screen a "squall" four miles away. They observed mountains on the island of Haiti, and on the 19th, the mountains of the Dominican Republic came into view. About noon the ship docked at Santa Domingo and the passengers were allowed to go ashore with a guide to explore the old city, the American Embassy and "Columbus' burial place."

As the ship resumed its path through the Caribbean, the islands of St. Lucia, Martinique and Barbados came into view, and at last they entered the mighty Atlantic Ocean where they were reminded that they were still 4,000 miles from Cape Town on the southern tip of Africa.

At first sailing was smooth, although the weather was rainy and dull, but about midway between South America and Africa the waters became rough and sleep was next to impossible. The boat rocked so steeply that Alvin and Georgia had to stay awake to keep from rolling out of bed at night. Spreading life jackets under the edge of the mattresses helped, but riding the “swells” was like trying to sleep on a bucking horse. The ship tipped at 21 degrees, causing chairs to slide and screech across the floor and overturn.

One day of travel was lost due to engine trouble. The Chief Mate remarked, “You have had a hurricane, seen a shark, had engine trouble — all you need is mutiny and man overboard for this to be a perfect story book trip.” Alvin was pleased that he had been able to use his nursing skills on the trip to relieve the Captain’s ear ache.

As they neared Cape Town where the waters are known as “the Cape of Storms” (later to become known as the “Cape of Good Hope”) the sea became rough again, and the wind strong and cold. The “Cape Doctor” as the strong, cold wind was called, was affecting the city, too. Called “Cape Doctor” because it is said to blow all bacteria out to sea, it was making the city unseasonably and uncomfortably cold and windy.

Mr. Hartle met Alvin and Georgia at the ship November 8 and took them to his home, reminding them that he had been the one who had met their ship when they had come to Africa thirty years before. In Cape Town they saw old friends and visited favorite places — Kirstenbosch Gardens and the beach at St. James where they had in former years picked up shells with their children.

They visited Woodstock church, Rosebank church and Bontehuel church where Alvin preached. The weather had gone from cold to unusually hot, breaking a ten year record for heat at 96 degrees. Mr. Hartle was Alvin's guide as they moved about the city to purchase needed supplies and to check on lost freight.

After five days in Cape Town, Alvin and Georgia boarded the train which would take them to Zambia. That night when they woke up in the semi-arid region called the "Karoo" they were covered with cinders from the coal burning engine of the train. The following night young people had water fights in the train's corridor all night, and so there was no water for the other passengers until noon.

After three nights on the train they crossed the Victoria Falls bridge over the Zambezi River and entered Zambia at the town of Livingstone. Here they were met by missionaries from Sinde Mission which was ten miles away. Other missionaries from Namwianga Mission soon arrived for a welcome dinner at the home of Leonard and Mabel Bailey at Sinde Mission.

Home Again at Namwianga Mission

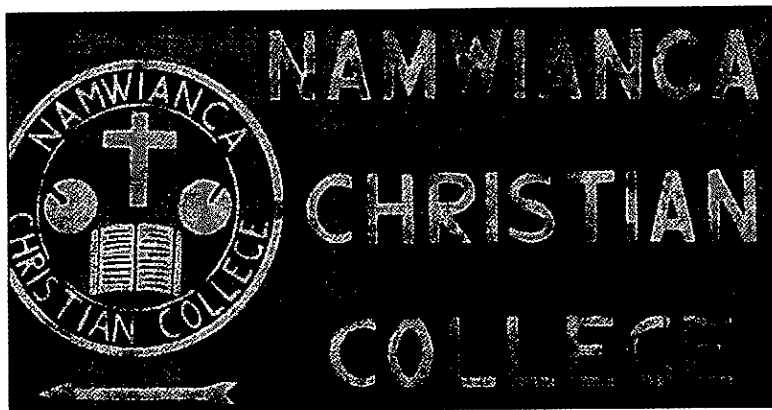
Or was it home? Torn between loved ones left behind and the joyous welcome from their friends in this land, they felt that God had work for them to do in Africa at this time, almost exactly thirty years since they first had come to Africa with the same convictions. But there was a difference — many differences — and who could name them all! This time there was no exuberance of youth, no anticipation of having a home with children, no sense of adventure and amazement at this new culture. They fell into the role of the "older missionaries", the only ones in the area. The young workers seemed happy to have someone to fill this

role — to counsel, advise, treat their illnesses and to baby-sit their children, as well as to relieve them of some of their teaching loads.

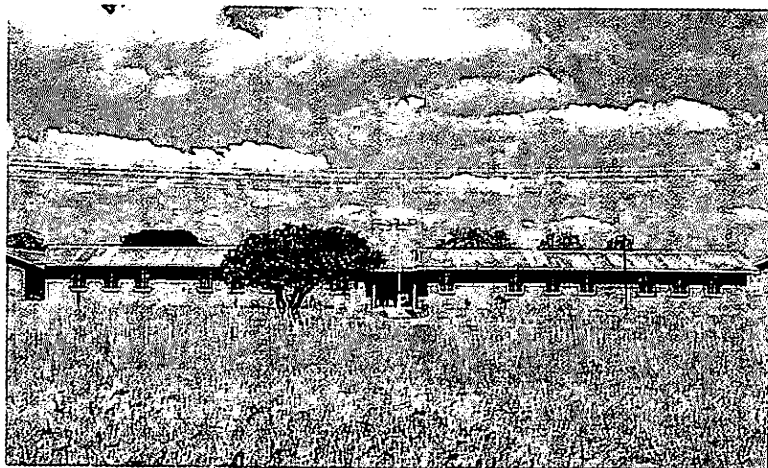
Ten days after Alvin and Georgia arrived it rained all night. Rain birds circled overhead, frogs croaked in the pool behind their house, and termite kings and queens swarmed en masse. Overnight the land became green and there was a feeling of urgency and expectation in the air. Like the rebirth of spring and the growing season in the northern hemisphere, time now to plant gardens!

Namwianca Christian Secondary School

When Alvin and Georgia left Africa seven years previously,



A sign on the Great North Road, pointing the way to "Namwianca Christian College".



Front entrance to one of the four classroom blocks which form a quadrangle. 1972.



A class of ninth or tenth grade students, wearing their school uniforms. Namwianga Christian Secondary School. 1972.



View inside one side of a girls' dormitory. Namwianga Christian Secondary School. 1972.

the secondary school for Africans was not yet even a dream. But the new government of Zambia had taken over most of the primary and elementary schools and so for our teaching to continue a high school was necessary. Mr. Merritt and Mr. Shewmaker presented this need to George Benson who raised money for the new buildings. Houston Ezell, a construction engineer from the USA, agreed to come to Zambia to oversee the construction of the buildings.

Alvin and Georgia were amazed that in their absence so much building had been done — classroom blocks, kitchen and dining buildings, dormitories, dwellings and a clinic. A new dwelling was being constructed for them at this site which was about one mile from the school buildings and dwellings where

they had lived in former years.

Namwianga Clinic

While they waited for construction of the clinic to be completed Alvin and Georgia decided to visit the health clinic at Kabanga Mission which was operated by trained African personnel to observe illnesses, treatments and personal relations with the patients. Besides the more common complaints such as coughs and colds, sore eyes, enteritis and malaria, they also saw leprosy, scabies, scurvy, hepatitis and many others. It was a useful week and lent insights into the clinic work before them.

Alvin and Georgia applied for, and were granted, Zambian nurse registration. They scheduled clinic hours in the afternoon after classes were dismissed for the day, and they added daily to their insights into treatments and personal relations.

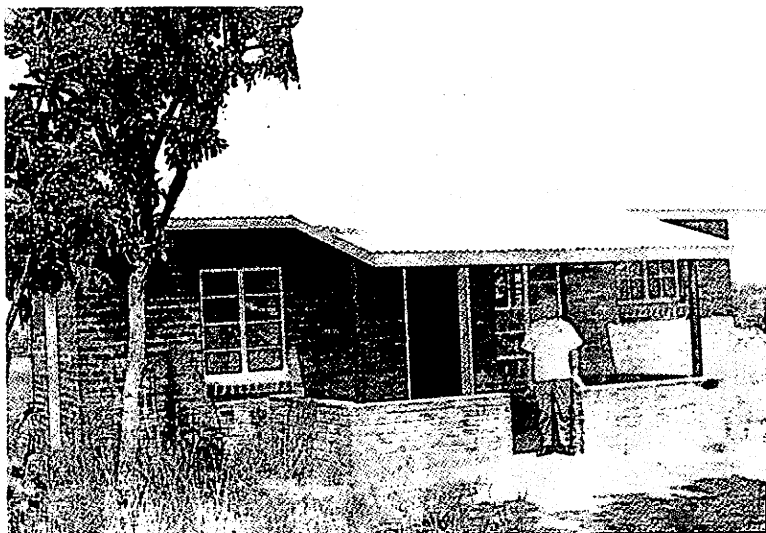
The Treatable Illnesses

Malaria was the most satisfying illness to treat because medicine for treatment was so speedy in reacting and recovery from the severe effects of the disease so complete.

If the illness proved to be serious enough to require hospitalization Alvin took the patient in his Datsun station wagon to Livingstone Hospital, ninety miles away, where there was a doctor.

The Untreatable Illnesses

Fear and superstition were ever present and had to be reckoned with in diagnosis. Most of the Africans felt that there were certain illnesses that could not be treated with modern medicine,



Alvin Hobby and the clinic. March, 1970.

but that they must return to their villages and there be treated by “traditional healers”.

It was true that Alvin was unable to diagnose or treat a condition that frequently manifested itself in different forms among the students. Sometimes the patient had seizures; sometimes he became comatose. Fellow students sometimes tried to revive him by beating him on the back with a Bible. But often all of the efforts to treat him were ineffective and he was allowed to return to the village to be treated by the “medicine man”.

And here, again, missionaries encounter a vital part of the life of an African that is little understood by the outsider. The Africans’ beliefs should never be ridiculed, be made light of, or be written off as unimportant. There is too much of the spirit

world that men do not understand, but missionaries can be sympathetic and try to understand the Africans' viewpoint on these matters. One important aspect of this insight is to understand the role of what is known as the "medicine man", also called "diviner" and "witch doctor". Supposedly this healer is a friend whose work is to protect the people against the evil sorcerer, or witch, who deals in death.

The Africans believe that both the witch and the witch doctor have awesome powers. It was reported to Alvin that the diviner, or witch doctor, is able to gaze into a pot of water, as a fortune teller gazes into a crystal ball, and see images that no one else can see. It is thought that by this method he can see where a certain person is and what he is doing — TV before its time!

If someone becomes very ill, or dies, it is usually felt that the witch is responsible and so the witch doctor's, or diviner's, skills are sought to undo the evil spell or to find the one who has caused the death. If the diviner chooses some elderly and innocent person in the village and designates him/her as the witch, who can contradict? The witch must die and be burned to remove his spirit forever from the clan. This practice, however, has been discouraged by the colonial governments.

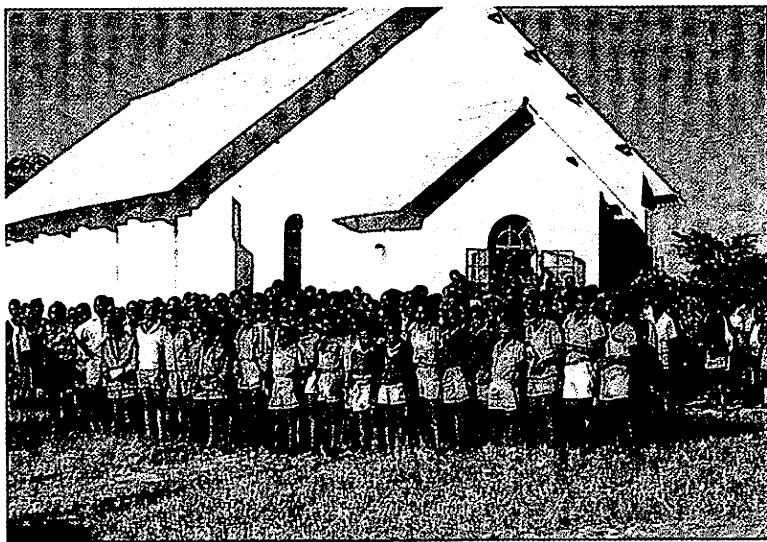
In these matters the missionary is ignorant and thus must tread lightly. The "Good News" he can teach with conviction — that God is more powerful than these evil spirits and that Jesus came to "destroy the devil's work" (1 John 3:8).

A New Worker Gained and Lost

After graduation from the University of Arkansas Anita had been working in the University Hospital as a registered nurse,

saving her money, and had decided to pay a visit to her parents and her old home. What a lovely surprise! Her parents hoped that the visit would be a long one, and by making several trips to talk with the authorities in Lusaka, they were able to obtain a work permit for her instead of the usual visitors visa.

All of the workers from the USA at Namwianga Mission at that time were young people except for Alvin and Georgia. Anita had grown up with Sam Shewmaker and Roy Merritt. Sam and his wife, Nancy, and Roy Merritt were there, as well as a number of other young people. The new secondary school was only one



Namwianga Mission church house where Dennis and Anita were married. This house was built by W. N. Short, assisted by the other men on the mission. Mr. Short quarried and cut the stone for the foundation from the large granite rocks found on the mission. In this picture, students are emerging from the house following a church service.

mile from Anita's old home so she fitted easily into the work of teaching, nursing and school librarian. It was a happy arrangement but change was inevitable.

Among the young people were two young men from Kansas who had been working among the villages in the area of Kabanga Mission until the new secondary school opened, at which time one of them, Dennis Mitchell, had come to teach in the new secondary school. Dennis had an older brother, Loy Mitchell, who was a missionary-teacher in Southern Rhodesia.

A romance is always intriguing, especially on a mission station where there is no TV, movie theatre or other diversions. And so the progress of the courtship of Dennis and Anita was watched with interest by Africans as well as the Americans.

In December, 1969, at the lovely little mission church house there was a wedding, solemnized by Dennis' brother Loy, and the young couple flew away to the USA where Anita worked as a nurse while Dennis studied for his Master's Degree in Missions.

Dennis and Anita returned to Zambia in September, 1971, bringing with them baby Brian. They again joined the staff at Namwianga Secondary School and remained in Zambia for another ten years.

Chapter 12

Livingstone, Victoria Falls and the Zambezi River

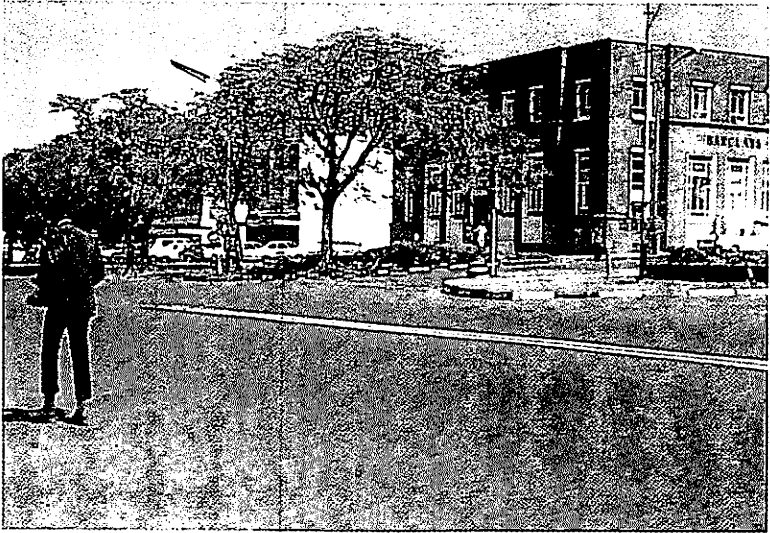
Livingstone Town

The town of Livingstone is named for David Livingstone, the famous explorer of the southern half of Africa. Livingstone, located on the great Zambezi River near one of the seven wonders of the natural world, Victoria Falls, is where thirty-five years earlier Georgia and Mrs. Rowe had waited near the hospital for Alvin's and Georgia's first child to be born. In fact, Livingstone was the hub town around which all of their important activities had centered since they first came to Africa.

In Livingstone there was an intriguing bright pink house with roses and mango trees growing in the yard, located on the corner, next door to the largest congregation of the Lord's church in Zambia. Alvin was of retirement age now. He and Georgia had never owned a house — and this house, which Anita said “had character”, was for sale! Alvin and Georgia felt that it didn't just happen. God had planned it.

Thus a new phase of their lives began, but it didn't resemble retirement! Their home became the hub of activity where all the missionaries from a wide radius met. To help accommodate them Alvin renovated another small house on the property with light housekeeping facilities so that those friends and fellow workers would have a place to stay when they came to Livingstone for hospital or business. One family occupied the guest house for a year because rent houses were difficult to find.

After working for another year at Namwianga Mission,

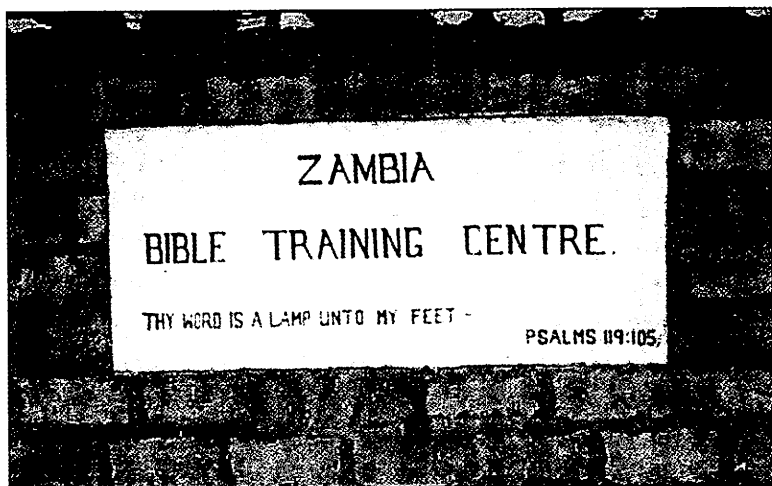


Main Street, Livingstone. 1972.

Dennis and Anita and their children bought a house seven miles away on the edge of Livingstone. Alvin, Dennis Mitchell, Eugene and Evelyn Perry, Lloyd and Pearl Henson (an English teacher) taught in the preacher training school which was located on the Henson farm about seven miles from Livingstone.

Alvin had more time for translation work now and made trips to Choma, 130 miles north, to meet with the Bible translation committee, of which he was a member. Work had begun on a revision of the Tonga Bible.

During the dry season Alvin and Georgia, Dennis and Anita Mitchell visited and encouraged the village churches: Namadula, Nyawa, Wacila, Mwanapapa, Siamuntu, Songwe, and others. In Livingstone, there was always visiting to be done in hospitals,



Bible training students and teachers. Teachers: Alvin Hobby, Lloyd Henson, Evelyn and Eugene Perry, Dennis Mitchell, Peter Masiya (lower right).



Dennis and Anita are teaching a Bible class near Kasia Village.

“old folks’ homes” and homes of church members.

The three Mitchell grandchildren, Brian, Joanne and Randy, who now lived in Livingstone, brought interest and satisfaction into the lives of their grandparents. When the children became school age they attended public school in the morning and Alvin, Georgia, and the children’s parents taught additional classes in the afternoon.

The Zambezi River

The Zambezi River rises in northwestern Zambia as a small spring. As it is fed by many tributary streams it grows and makes a journey of over 2,000 miles to the Indian Ocean. About seven miles from the town of Livingstone the Zambezi plunges over a

deep chasm, forming the world famous Victoria Falls. It then flows through the deep and narrow Batoka Gorge, which at its narrowest point is compressed to about one-thirtieth of its former width. Within range of the spray of the Falls this gorge is spanned by a bridge, built in 1905, one hundred feet above the roaring water over which trains and cars pass between Zambia and Zimbabwe. After the river emerges from the gorge it is impounded by Kariba Dam to form Kariba Lake. For four hundred miles, the river marks the border between Zambia and Zimbabwe, as it makes its journey to the Indian Ocean.

The Hobbys and the Mitchell family found a refreshing place for picnics on the shady banks of the Zambezi River. Before the



Victoria Falls bridge, a motor and railway bridge, joins Zambia and Zimbabwe and spans the river just below the point where the waters run out of the chasm.



The Zambezi River

river plunged into the chasm it was a wide and calm expanse. It was interrupted by green islands and shallow pools, where the loud grunts and snorts of the hippos delighted the children. Darters dried their outstretched wings as they rested on old logs in the shallow water and the continuous roar of nearby Victoria Falls lent a mysterious and eerie atmosphere to an otherwise peaceful scene.

Victoria Falls

Some have called the Falls “one of the most imposing phenomena of the world,” and it is, indeed, known as one of the seven wonders of the natural world. Over the chasm which is a mile wide in places, falls the largest curtain of water known any-

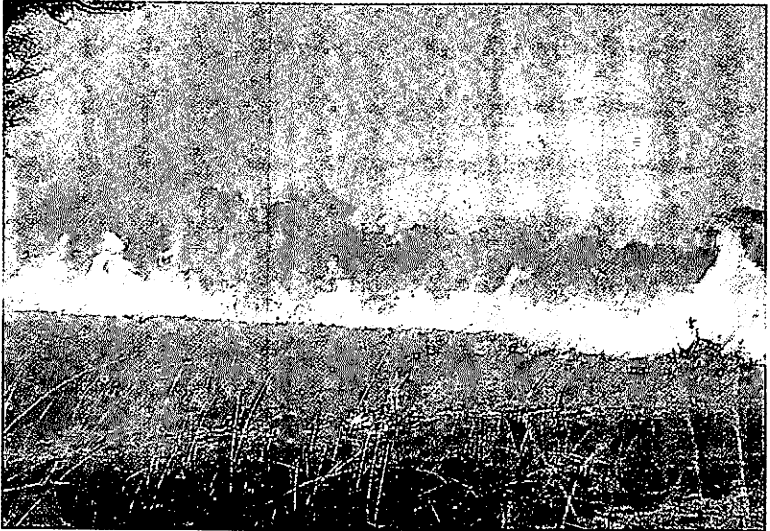


Georgia admires the Falls from above the Eastern Cataract.

where in the world. The water plunges 355 feet to the rocks below into a narrow gorge. Spray from the falls ascends many feet into the air and the spray appears especially beautiful on cool mornings when it rises very high and is colored pink by the rising sun. No wonder it was given the name "Mosi-os-Tunya" ("Smoke that Thunders") by the Kalolo people. Later, in 1855, when the first European visitor, David Livingstone, viewed the Falls he named them "Victoria Falls" for Queen Victoria.

Grass Fires

When the long dry season came the tall grass covering the vleis became a tinderbox. A single spark could set the whole country ablaze. Fanned by winds, the inferno could come roaring across the plains and onto the mission, threatening everything



Grass fire, Namwianga Mission, August, 14, 1960

in its path. At such times, it was necessary for all the men to drop whatever they were doing and join together to try to stop the fire. Each year in May before the grass became completely dry but was just dry enough to burn, Alvin would go out with a crew of helpers, carrying wet burlap bags, and they would burn wide strips of grass called “fire guards” around the mission property so that when the inevitable wild fires came roaring through the country they would be stopped by the burned strips. He found that this worked very well and was easier than trying to stop an inferno, fed by the wind and out of control, which was often too hot to be approached.

After his many years of experience burning fire guards and fighting wild fires Alvin was not concerned about the small job which he was undertaking near Livingstone. He was merely

burning a strip of grass around his garden. With him was a helper with the usual wet sack. Indeed, the job was successfully completed, with the exception of a sprig of grass which, unnoticed, had not been completely extinguished and had revived in the wind. This caught Alvin's nylon shoe lace on fire and quickly set his long polyester trousers. Before Alvin knew what was happening his trouser legs were ablaze. Alvin fought the flames with his hands and rolled on the ground while his African helper stood paralyzed with fear, wet sack in hand.

Meanwhile at the farm house where Lester Brittell and his family were living, Lester was doing mechanical work on his car when he decided to walk down to the garden and see how the fire guard was coming along. A minute later would have been too late to save Alvin. Lester snatched the wet sack from the hand of the boy and extinguished the blaze.

Georgia was at their home seven miles away. Alvin was taken to the hospital in Livingstone; and when Georgia saw him there, his hands appeared to be the worse affected as they were covered with large blisters, but his legs were too deeply burned to blister. He had third degree burns over twenty percent of his body. Alvin stayed two weeks in Livingstone hospital where they did the best they could for him with the equipment they had. But when it became apparent that skin grafts would be required, Georgia began to make plans to take him to the USA for treatment. After two weeks the deep burns on his legs had formed heavy crusts as if Alvin were wearing leather leggings. Thus on the flight to the USA he was able to sit in a regular seat. At Frankfurt in Germany the doctors gave him special attention, including a place to rest and wheel chairs for transport. In Little Rock, Arkansas, Alvin was met by an ambulance to transport him

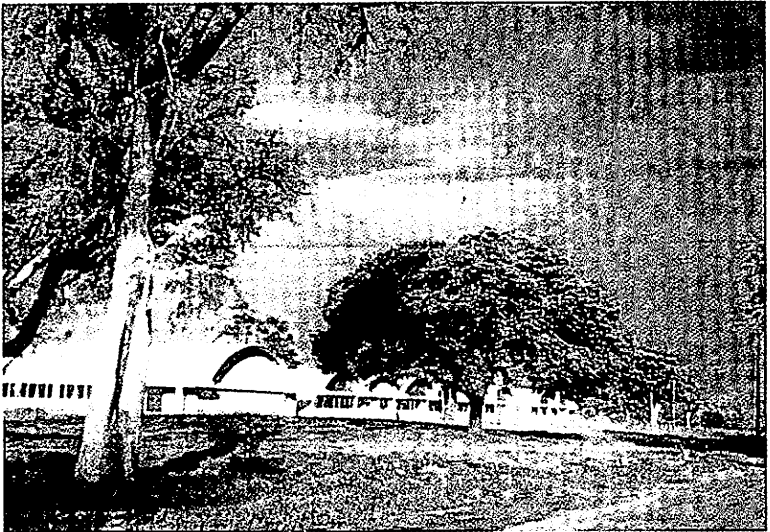
to the University Teaching Hospital where he had worked for two years. He was placed in a private room on the same floor where he had worked as an R.N. The same head nurse was still there, so he received special care. Since Georgia had no home in Little Rock and since she was an R.N., she was allowed to stay in the room and help with Alvin's care. This was their "home" for the next ninety days required for Alvin's treatment which included painful dressings and skin grafts.

Did God know? Of course He knew. He sent Lester to save him. He supplied unusual treatment, and He caused many good things to come from this experience. It is an excellent example of how "all things work together for the good of those who love the Lord, and are called according to His purpose."

Livingstone Public Schools

After Alvin was well again he and Georgia returned to their home in Livingstone, Zambia. There Georgia was invited by a Christian headmaster to teach Bible classes in his school. A daily Bible class is part of the curriculum in Zambian schools. Georgia inquired at other elementary schools and learned that they would be happy to have her teach in their schools also, and so she arranged for as many daily Bible classes as she could teach. The regular teachers were delighted. It gave them a break; so Georgia taught Bible full time in these schools for two years until the Zambian government decided that the teachers were having life too easy and that they should do all the teaching.

This opened the way for Georgia to teach in Linda High School, a government school with an enrollment of about one thousand students. She taught Bible at Linda for two years and received a small salary for teaching.



High school buildings in Linda township, Livingstone.

War

There was war between the two countries, formerly known as Northern and Southern Rhodesia. Northern Rhodesia had gained independence from Britain and was now known as “Zambia”. But Southern Rhodesia, which was more developed and whose population included many prosperous white farmers, was resisting the change. The majority of the people of Southern Rhodesia, black nationals of the country, were fighting for their independence from Britain; Zambia was sympathetic to them and was giving refuge to the “freedom fighters”. The white government and military of Southern Rhodesia followed these freedom fighters (whom they called “terrorists”) across the Zambezi and bombed them — in Livingstone.

Change is Inevitable

The Mitchell children, Alvin's and Georgia's grandchildren, had grown. The oldest was eleven years old, and Dennis and Anita felt that he should be placed in a USA school soon in order to ease the transition from one culture to another, so they were leaving.

The last straw came when the Zambian government decided it would no longer use expatriate teachers if Zambians could do the job. This meant that Georgia could no longer teach Bible in the public schools.

When Alvin and Georgia bought the house in Livingstone they had called it their "retirement home" and had thought it would be their home for the remainder of their lives. They had lived in Livingstone for seven years and Alvin was now 72 years old; so he and Georgia concluded that it was time to return permanently to the USA and to give some time in their few remaining years to their ten grandchildren.

Chapter 13

Bringing in the Sheaves

*He who goes out weeping,
carrying seed to sow,
Will return with songs of joy,
carrying sheaves with him.*

Psalms 126:6

Forty-four years earlier Alvin had gone out carrying seed to sow. He had sowed steadily and faithfully all of those years. Now it was time to bring in the sheaves. He had been made an elder in the Livingstone church after their move to the town of Livingstone. In early 1982 he announced to the church that he would soon return to the USA where his children were living.

The people understood. Some of the church leaders had started school as children in Namwianga School with Alvin as their headmaster. They wished to show in the best way they could their appreciation for Alvin and his work. The entire church began to plan a super farewell party to be given in June, but it was to be a surprise for Alvin.

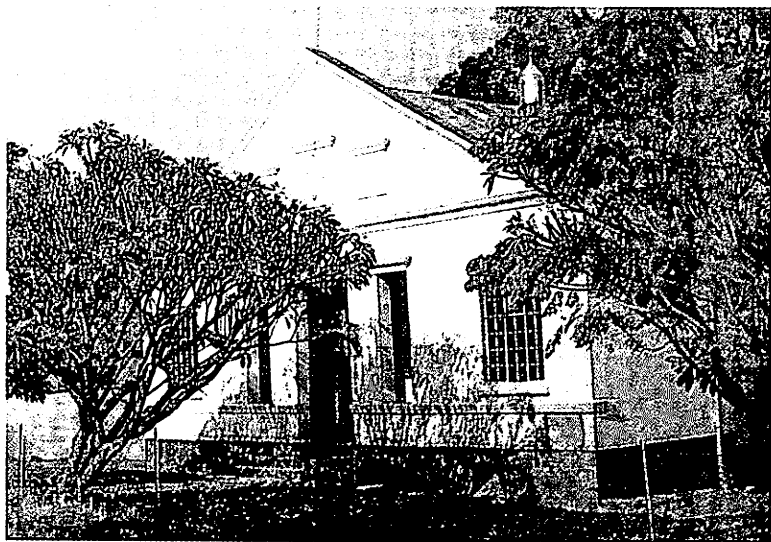
The people worked very hard. They cleaned the church houses and grounds, and planned to feed more than seven hundred people, which they did. There would be rice, chicken, beef, greens, insima and many cakes, even though the ingredients were hard to come by.

The Livingstone church owns three large buildings on a large lot. These had been purchased from the Hebrew community whose members departed Zambia after independence. The largest building is used as an assembly hall and the other two are

used for classrooms.

For the special occasion long tables were set up in the two classroom buildings and they were set with the best linens and tableware that the congregation could afford. These, of course, could not accommodate seven hundred people, but were reserved for the elders and teachers and those who would be speakers on the program, but everyone would be fed.

The day, June 29, 1982, finally arrived. The women arrived very early in the morning, as did live chickens and the other foods to be cooked. Fires were lit around the iron cooking pots on the grounds and greens were chopped. There was much work to be done!



The building where the church assembles in Livingstone's central location. March, 1975. Hobby's home is to the left, just on the other side of the fence.



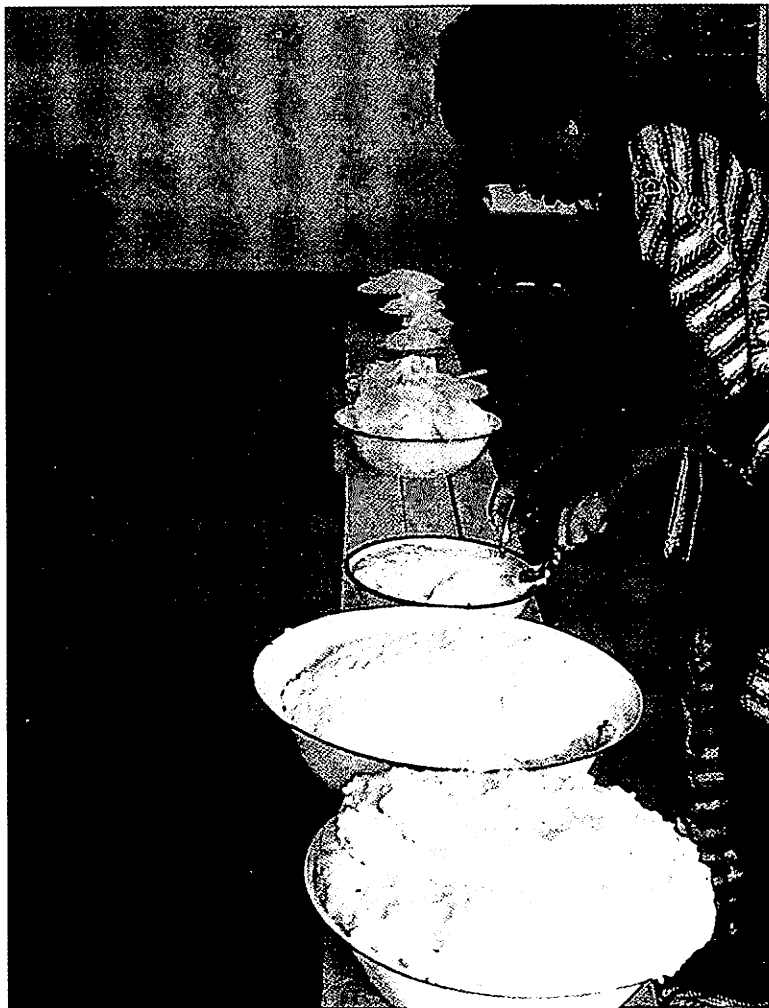
Some of the tables. Bowls of rice in the center.



Lighting fires to begin cooking.

Roy Merritt wrote of the day in his Namwianga Alumni Newsletter for June-July, 1982:

“A couple of weeks ago there was a big ‘farewell’ party at the Livingstone Church of Christ for the Hobbys. There were more than 700 people, including children, at the place! It was a very exciting day for me to see so many Christians gathered together in one place. Dozens of these people were church leaders from around the Southern Province — and a huge number of the madalas (Note: old men. G.H.) had been students at Namwianga or Kabanga when my father or Brother Hobby were teachers there. I was also delighted to see at least eleven ex-Namwianga Secondary students there, too! The Hobbys are leaving Zambia permanently in two weeks. My mother and father, who have been visiting here



Bowls of insima, unsalted, ready for serving with a salty stew. To cook insima correctly, water, corn meal, expertise, and an hour of time are required.

since the middle of May, will be returning about the end of the month.

“There were speeches all afternoon, and at some point, Alvin was presented with gifts — a wood carving and a large bronze picture-plaque of an African buffalo.

“The large cake which was presented to them expressed the wishes of them all: ‘To Mr. and Mrs. Hobby. **God be with you until we meet again.**’

“Yes, they were his children and ‘Muluti Hobby’ had given his life to serving them. He had made Africa his home and he thought it would always be his home, but then on the other side of the ocean there was another place and another call. Not many years of life remained to answer the call of his own children and native land.



“Alvin’s leaving Africa did not mean that his work would cease. He had joined the ranks of the pioneer missionaries who were already working in Africa, and many others had joined in the work after he and Georgia arrived. Now there were younger ones, better trained and better equipped who would carry it on. The church in Zambia, for generations to come, would grow and thrive due to the combined efforts of these servants of God.”

A Letter from Jacobo Sibbili

Note: Mr. and Mrs. Sibbili were married in 1938, as were Alvin and Georgia. Jacobo Sibbili taught in Namwianga Schools and Alvin and Georgia were closely associated with the couple throughout their time in Africa. Alvin loved Jacobo as he loved his own brothers. This letter was written when Alvin retired from the Zambian work at age 72. The letter follows:

Box 5, Kalomo

June 22, 1982

Dear Mr. and Mrs. Hobby,

My wife and me have known Hobby's for the past forty four years. Mr. Hobby was one of the best teacher when the country was called Northern Rhodesia Government. He was teaching teacher training courses at Namwianga, as well as a Manager of Schools.

Mr. Hobby served the country extremely tremendous. Your name will not be forgotten in Zambia. You sacrificed yourself. Mr. Hobby worked hard more than he would (should G.H.) have done. Mr. Hobby, you worked tremendously in the country. Your name has been planted. Mrs. Hobby was the first teacher to teach my wife Mrs. Sibbili how to sew needlework. My wife is now one the best with a needle and thread fasten with stitches. That was in the year 1938. Mrs. Hobby we honestly thank you for the work you have done for us.

Mr. and Mrs. Hobby you were one of the useful and helpful hand. You were helping our children when they were going to school that was remarkable and unforgettable this is a true fact. You remember in the year 1950. When we completed our teacher training courses as for me was given a bicycle by Mr. Hobby that was a mental punishment of which cannot be forgotten. Your help was more successful to us.

In the year 1973 you personal helped us K30.00 for

our palace (new house G.H.). Mr. and Mrs. Hobby me and my wife are not praising for such case what you have done is enough. You have served the nation for the past 44 years just as Mr. J. D. Merritt served Simwatachela area for the past 53 years.

On June 20th 1982 he preached at Kabanga church of Christ and gave a very good sermon.

If it possible can you would inform your church to service again in Zambia. (Let you return. G.H.)

We shall be pleased to meet you again. Mr. Hobby try to write to us. Mr. Hobby there is an English saying which says out of mind and out of sight. Mr. and Mrs. Hobby we worked together peacefully and harmany. May God guide you along your way home land and give you a very good blessing.

Thank you for your highly appreciation and cooperation.

Very Yours Sincerely,

J. J. Sibbili

Chapter 14

Alvin's Crowning Work and Sustaining Hope

"From everlasting to everlasting thou art God." Somewhere between the two eternities God has plucked out and set within a time frame a period in which preparation was made to send His Son. The entire story of the Bible concerns this period of time. One day while Alvin was in Africa it all came to him like a flash, that this period of time was a cycle, with the cross on which Christ died being the turning point of the cycle, and events preceding the cross, and following the cross, were mirror images of each other in this arrangement, the two eternities stretching out on either end.

Alvin wrote a book, **Cycle of the Ages**, explaining and expanding on these thoughts. The first edition of the book was published but the world was too well off economically to stop and listen. Undaunted, Alvin wrote a revised edition but still conditions of this life were not conducive to people being inclined toward spiritual things and events of the future.

Alvin never lost hope that some day his writings would be published and that they would give hope and courage to those who were caught up in the trials and tribulations of the end times, before Christ returns to the earth to claim His own.

Chapter 15

Alvin's Later Years

Soon after leaving Africa in 1982, Alvin and Georgia bought a small house in Grove, Oklahoma, next door to their youngest son, Ken, and his family, and across the street from the church house. Alvin taught Bible classes to the adults in the church and later was chosen as an elder, along with two others. It was the fourth church in which Alvin had served as an elder, two in the USA and two in Africa.

There was time now for Alvin to enjoy his grandchildren.



The Shoeshine Boys.
Alvin and his youngest grandson, Gerren Hobby, 1985.

Alvin's Grandchildren and Their Spouses, 2000

Kimberly Hobby Wagner and Kendall Wagner
 James David Hobby, Jr. and Avery Bonds Hobby
 Christopher Allen and Vickie Hutchinson Hobby
 Brian Dennis and Laura Kenningham Mitchell
 Jonathan Edward and Angela Phillips Hobby
 Joanne Denise Mitchell
 Anessa Hobby Westbrook and Tim Westbrook
 Randy Alvin and Selena Krout Mitchell
 Jared Adair Hobby
 Tianna Layne Hobby
 Gerren Paul Hobby

Great Grandchildren, 2000

Lindsay Kay Wagner	Zachary Taylor Hobby
Jessica Marie Wagner	Alina Rebeka Westbrook
Megan Gail Hobby	Michael Phillip Hobby
Hayden Alvin Hobby	Hannah Rose Mitchell
James Blake Hobby	Charissa Alyss Mitchell
Emma Elizabeth Mitchell	Anna Sara Westbrook

In 1989 when Ken accepted a teaching position at Harding University, he moved with Ann and their children to Searcy,

Arkansas. After a few months Alvin and Georgia also moved to Searcy, where they were three hundred miles nearer to all of their children and grandchildren. Alvin was eighty years old at this time. Living near Harding University presented Alvin with a unique opportunity to encourage young people who were interested in going into all the world to teach that God so loved the world that He gave His Son, and to tell them that God listens and cares and is faithful.



The Sower

While sowing in the morning
 You labored hour by hour;
Though weary at the noontime,
 Your strength was in His power.

As evening shadows lengthen,
 The laborer turns home;
The fruit hangs heavy on the stalk,
 For harvest time has come.

The radiant sun shone warmly
 As you set forth on your way;
At eve the light shines more and more
 Unto the perfect day.

Our blessed hope!
 by Mary Neal Pitner, 1988
 Used by permission

And Alvin's **Blessed Hope**, too, as he departed this earth to be with the Lord, May 9, 1997.

The following is the last paragraph of an article in "Kalomo Reporter", May, 1997, by Dr. Clifton Ganus, Jr., who spoke at Alvin's funeral:

"Alvin Hobby will be missed very much, but there are many great memories and a blessed assurance of his salvation and resurrection when Christ returns. Paul, in 1

Corinthians 15, assured us of that resurrection, and said, *'Wherefore, my beloved brother, be ye steadfast, unmovable, always abounding in the work of the Lord forasmuch as ye know that your labor is not in vain in the Lord.'* This statement aptly describes the life of Alvin Hobby — steadfast, unmovable, abounding in God's service. Well done, thou good and faithful servant."

A Tribute Worth Waiting For

To Georgia,

My best friend, in memory of our fifty
six plus ~~wedding~~ anniversary period which
started June 3rd, 1938, this being the most
interesting, the most productive and the
most filled with happiness of any period
of my life.

Words cannot adequately express my love
and appreciation for what this period of time
has meant to me.

HAPPY BIRTHDAY ^{to you,} ~~and this~~ AUGUST 8th,
1994, and may the Lord help us to have
more days like this.

From Alvin to Georgia, MUCH LOVE.

Note: Alvin's handwriting was once beautiful and his students copied it. Although in his later years it was not as beautiful, it is still legible. He was almost 85 years old when this was written.