

Missions

Discovery School

Building Hopeful Futures in Burundi

Bible Society of Egypt
Seeing Lives Changed

TeamWorkers Abroad
Helping an Assembly in Chile

MSC Canada
Following an ACCTS
Shipment to Zambia



BY NATHAN BRAMSEN

Rethinking Resolutions 3 Dangers to Avoid

This time of year, we evaluate the status quo, consider our patterns, identify our weaknesses, and resolve to change. Yet I question the practice of New Year's resolutions. I'm not referring to resolutions of losing weight, clean eating, or learning a new skill. A resolution can be a healthy choice. However, resolutions can become dangerous when we apply them to spiritual things, such as responding to the Holy Spirit's conviction.

Consider the following three potential pitfalls in spiritual resolutions:

1 Our decision to change should not be controlled by a calendar but by the Holy Spirit's constant conviction through the Word.

Responding to God should not be based on convenience, preference, or calendar. As it's been said, obedience delayed is disobedience. Because we are followers of Christ, God blesses us with the presence of the Holy Spirit Who guides us into all truth and glorifying Christ.¹ We are to "walk in the Spirit," taking "every thought into captivity to the obedience of Christ," moment by moment, not when we resolve to.²

Did we once obey His instruction only to grow stagnant and comfortable in that place of service? God's Word is "a lamp to my feet and a light to my path."³ He leads us step by step so that our eyes must be fixed prayerfully on Him rather than on our plans and goals. Do we receive a baton but fail to pass it on? Do we assume a role of leadership but equip no one to take our place? Do we take up the call to lead but forget Christ's command to "go and make disciples"?⁴ Do we develop the gift of teaching only to harbor it in our community? Do we view retirement as vacation or as an opportunity to invest in eternity? Have we allowed a good thing to become our focus rather than the One from Whom all good things come? Are we stuck in our ways, or have we surrendered to His will and timing?

Another aspect of this danger is that we tend to stop when

God never said anything about stopping. Do we allow a time frame, fatigue, frustration, perceived failure, or man's evaluation to decide our length of involvement in what God has called us to do? Be faithful in the place of your calling and focused on the constant guidance of God's Spirit. "He Who calls you is faithful; He will surely do it."⁵

2 Our power to keep a resolution is not determined by self-discipline but by dependence on God's power.

This new year may find you in a place you did not choose, a situation you wish you could have avoided, or in a position with responsibilities that seem overwhelming. The problem is not that we cry out to God in desperation but, rather, that we fail to realize we are always desperate for Him. Without Him, we can do nothing.⁶

Is there an area of your life or ministry that you have not surrendered to His moment-by-moment guidance? The solution to change is found in surrender to His lordship rather than a mere resolve to act differently. One is centered on the One directing while the other is focused on a personal decision.

3 Our failure in keeping a resolution is not reprimanded by a call to restart but is a reminder to respond to conviction and submit to God's correction and healing.

Conviction of the Holy Spirit is one great blessing of being God's child and is designed to conform us to Christ's image. It is not a call to restart a resolution but is a continuation of an intimate relationship with the Almighty, which repentance deepens. He not only restores a repentant believer but also redeems the broken pieces for His glory.

God promises to guide us with His eyes.⁷ May our foremost focus be on intimacy in walking with Him step by step. ■

Nathan Bramsen serves in Other Overseas Service (MPH Day 28).

¹ John 16:13. ² Galatians 5:16; 2 Corinthians 10:5. ³ Psalm 119:105. ⁴ Matthew 28:19. ⁵ 1 Thessalonians 5:24, ESV. ⁶ John 15:5. ⁷ Psalm 32:8.

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COVER PHOTO: Student at Discovery School in Burundi—Photo by Kim Hankerson





DISCOVERY SCHOOL

God Builds Hopeful Futures in Burundi

BY JESSE & JOY JOHNSON

In 2006, when we moved to Burundi, the civil war that ravaged Burundi for more than 10 years was winding down. Our local elders were eager to see the country's education system restored as soon as possible with the Lord's people leading the way. When the elders learned that Joy was a teacher, they approached us with the idea of reopening the Christian school that had operated on the Emmanuel Church property from 1985 to 1994, when the fighting grew so close it could not stay open. The local elders reasoned that reopening the school, this time as a secondary school, would be a sign of hope.

We walked to the school to take a look. Although the buildings still stood, five of the dilapidated classrooms housed refugees, and elders studying at Timothy Bible School depended on the other three for their dormitory, classroom, and dining hall. A small extension at the end of one classroom block served as a temporary morgue when travel to the cemetery was unsafe, and occasionally, it was in use. Reopening the school seemed like a mind-boggling impossibility, but we knew God could do it! However, as we prayed, the Lord brought more challenges to mind rather than giving us peace. The red tape involved in opening a secondary school is notoriously difficult. Plus, Joy was certified as a K-9 teacher, not a secondary teacher, and Jesse recalled that his grandparents and parents had often been called upon to carry the school financially. We observed more pressing needs around us than that of opening a school. Every day, we had desperate people waiting at our door, asking for

food. Jesse took these thoughts back to the local leadership, and we all agreed that the Lord's answer was, "No, not now."

GOD SENDS STUDENTS

Two years later, the elders approached us again. By then, the refugees had either moved back to their homes or could do so with a little assistance. This time, the elders suggested a preschool. We would only need one building, so the Bible school wouldn't be disturbed. Government requirements for starting a preschool were minimal in comparison to secondary schools. At the time, our son Zach was two years old, so creating a curriculum meant extending to other children the learning opportunities we gave him at home. The Lord opened the way, and we agreed to start a small preschool with two classes.

We hired a receptionist to handle enrollment and told her to accept around 40 students. When we checked in shortly before opening day, 80 children were on the list. When confronted, the receptionist told us that she tried to tell applicants we were full. "It's impossible," she insisted. "Let me give you an example. Yesterday, an important general came into the office. He had the names of his two children and his phone number on a piece of paper. I told him we were full. He slapped the paper down on my desk and said, 'I know. Call me when you agree to accept them.' I couldn't say no to a general!" Recognizing the need, we hired two more teachers. We planned to put two teachers in each classroom, and each one could manage 20 students.



GOD ENABLES GROWTH

Discovery School has grown by leaps and bounds. God blessed and built up the school beyond what we could imagine. Today, we have about 1,200 students enrolled. Since 2009, we added one grade per year and now offer up to the equivalent of US 10th grade. In two years, our first class will graduate. Every year, we need to build at least four new classrooms to accommodate the growth. School fees cover the staff's salaries, so the school is operationally sustainable, but the fees can't begin to cover the annual building costs. But, each year, God provides in a different way, through a combination of individuals, churches, and grants. Adding to the campus is like painting by number. God's provision for that year dictates our next steps. Sometimes, He says, "I'll provide for you to build this bit now," or "No, wait on that bit," or "Build here instead." We appreciate prayer as we seek funding again for the four classrooms and the bathroom facilities needed for next September.

God not only provides financially for the school, but He also provides the staff needed to run it. He brought more than 100 employees into Discovery School's family. Because Joy trained to be a teacher, she planned to work with children, not with adults as an academic director in charge of teacher training and curriculum development, although she is now studying to earn a master's degree in the field. And Jesse never expected to be the de facto superintendent of a school. However, we see how God prepared us for these roles, and the joy that comes from mentoring and partnering with local colleagues is a blessing. All of the staff members profess to personally know Christ. Our faith provides the foundation to serve as a center from which "the fragrance of Christ" can spread "among those who are being saved and among those who are perishing." (2 Corinthians 2:15) We strive to spread the knowledge of Christ to children and families who don't know Him by presenting Bible lessons, teaching every subject through a Christian worldview, and reflecting the love of Christ in all we say and do.

From top: In 2008, Jesse and several coworkers began repairing the original elementary school; That same year, Joy held training sessions with the first faculty members; By 2016, the number of faculty increased significantly; The school uses the original preschool building, but it needs renovating; Today, the elementary building has a second floor to accommodate more students.



GOD OFFERS HELP

The joy of being in close relationships also involves the pain of sharing one another's burdens. Life in Burundi is difficult. The country ranks as one of the three poorest in the world, and with the loss of financial aid from the West for political reasons, things have grown harder over the past few years. Many are hungry, health care is poor, and jobs are scarce. Here in the capital, you can't see the poverty by looking at people because they take pride in looking nice when they go out. Many borrow clothes from extended family as needed and walk purposefully to their destinations to find employment or to certain street corners to possibly be selected as day laborers.

Poverty makes itself known in unexpected ways. In a recent math department meeting, we shared prayer requests. Teasing, we asked Arthur, a 28-year-old teacher, if he wanted us to pray for a bride for him. "I can't even think about that," he responded. "My father had a stroke, and I am the only one providing for my whole family. I have two brothers still in high school, and I am responsible for their school fees as well as regular provisions." Generally, the culture expects a man, before marriage, to own a small piece of land and have built his own house, in addition to paying the bride's price. A man like Arthur has no way to save for those goals while providing for six family members.

Some other Discovery teachers like Arthur obtained loans to build small houses so that they could marry, but now the bank deducts payments directly from their salaries, and the remaining amount is hardly enough to live on. During the war years, Julian managed to marry even though he was only renting. Several years after he started working at Discovery, his wife died in childbirth, and his premature daughter died days later. Two years ago, he married a widow with a small daughter, and they now have two more children. Tired of rent consuming much of his salary and desiring to meet the cultural standard, he secured a loan to build a house. When payments used most of his salary, he worked extra jobs and saved money any way he could. Eventually, Julian worked himself into a health crisis. Because Discovery is a family, we transitioned him into the role of assistant dean of discipline, which is less demanding physically and allows him to work while recovering his health, avoiding disability. Julian has an incredible attitude and is an indispensable part of the student-welfare team. He is wise and gentle as he talks through difficult issues with students and parents.

GOD PROVIDES HOPE

We see many cases like this. It pains us to be unable to pay higher salaries; they would help many. However, parents struggle with the current economic situation too and can't pay higher school fees. Even if we received gifts or assistance for salaries, it would be unwise to start something we couldn't continue since we seek to stay sustainable. Please pray for blessing

and continued peace for Burundi. Pray that God will meet each teacher's needs. Pray for wisdom for us in responding to constant requests, which we sympathize with but are often unable to oblige.

Despite the need, Discovery stands as a beacon of hope. Continued construction, even if it stops and starts due to funding, is a testimony to all who see it. It reminds parents, students, teachers, and even local church leaders that their country is not forgotten and that God is at work in their midst. Discovery is Burundi's first truly Burundian-English school, it hosts the country's first official special education program, and it is the first in other milestones, from offering aquaponics to having a skateboard half-pipe. It provides the students affordable access to an excellent English library and a science lab equipped with microscopes and seeks to develop students' critical thinking skills—all of which are normally available to only the wealthiest families. Reflecting on the 12 years since the school started, we mark this testimony as an Ebenezer, declaring, "Thus far the Lord has helped us." (1 Samuel 7:12) Rejoice with us in what He has done, and pray for His help and continued blessing in the work of Discovery School. ■

Jesse and Joy Johnson are commended from Believers Bible Chapel in Charlotte, North Carolina, and Forest Hills Bible Chapel in Ada, Michigan.



Right (from top): After a skateboard lesson, Discovery students are excited to use the half-pipe; Today, the developed Discovery campus facilitates the school's high-quality education.



TeamWorkers Abroad

Uniting for the Lord's Work in Chile

BY FRED SCOTT



Sometimes, the Lord reaches across the world to make His work go forward. In 2015, after learning of TeamWorkers Abroad from a believer in New Jersey, David Roa (*Missionary Prayer Handbook* Day 20) contacted the organization, which assists missionaries with construction projects. David requested our help with building a new gathering place for a growing assembly that he worked with in Quillota, Chile. The church owned a city block, but it needed to be cleared, which included removing a cement swimming pool.

In 2016, Tim DeJong, a contractor and TeamWorkers Abroad board member, evaluated several proposed projects, including the assembly in Quillota. As the assembly waited on the Lord, they cleared away the swimming pool and installed a fence around the property for protection. The neighbors appreciated their work as teens could no longer hide from authorities in the empty lot. Some of the neighbors were willing to store tools for the assembly, and they supplied needed water and electricity.

The first trip

In March 2017, TeamWorkers Abroad assembled a team of seven people to work on the project. Tim and I came from the United States, and Mario Paineman traveled from Santiago. From the local assembly, Jeremias Gonzalez and Carlos Oporto participated, and Cristobal Fernandez, who was visiting his sister in the assembly, and David Roa also joined us. Before we arrived, the foundation was poured, and metal posts were installed. Then, when our team arrived, some of us welded beams and steel joists in place to support a second story and covered them with plywood; others built a shed to house tools, supplies, and an half bath. On the same trip, our team laid a foundation for the handicapped bathroom with plumbing.

However, construction on the building was delayed due to the cost of repairs after a break-in at the assembly's existing building. Yet the church continued to impact its new neighborhood with kids' clubs and weekly door-to-door visits.

The second trip

By September 2019, we put together another team to help the believers in Chile. This time, the team included four people: Tim, Art Burnham, my wife, Sue, and me. Art is an electrician, and Sue came to help design the kitchen and sew curtains for the windows. Over two weeks, from September 20 to October 5, our goal was to enclose and roof the handicapped bathroom and enclose a portion of the structure to use for kids' club and to store supplies. Before our trip ended, we built the walls, put plywood in place, barred the windows to prevent break-ins, and prepared curtains for the windows.

The continuing work

Because the assembly desires to expand the structure's size and include a second story, the project remains incomplete. But it is a good example of how God brings diverse individuals together for the Gospel. Many people have supported the teams with prayer and financial gifts for materials and to connect the utilities. Through this support, the assembly in Quillota has received encouragement, and the Lord's work has gone forward. Pray for the assembly's outreach and the continuing work on the building and for others to join TeamWorkers Abroad in helping believers around the world through building projects. ■

Fred and Sue Scott are commended to the ministry of TeamWorkers Abroad by High Point Bible Chapel in Davenport, Iowa.

Clockwise from top left: David, Art, Tim, Mario, Fred, and Jeremias gather to help the Quillota chapel; David, Tim, and Art discuss the framework of the handicapped bathroom; Mario, Jeremias, and David make bars for the windows; Jeremias and Cristobal attach plywood to the joists while David looks on.

ACCTS Mission Shipping

Volunteers Follow a Shipment to Zambia

BY MARILYN BARNES



ACCTS Mission Shipping, an acronym for “answering Christ’s call to serve,” is a program of MSC Canada. Its primary function is to ship supplies to mission workers, stations, and hospitals, largely in Zambia. Believers across North America provide the needed goods and equipment and deliver them to MSC’s warehouse in Markham, Ontario, or the facility in Portage la Prairie, Manitoba. Common items include Bibles, commentaries, new or like-new clothing, and school, hospital, and maintenance supplies. Once appropriately packaged, the goods are transported to missionaries in 20- or 40-foot-long containers, like those on trains and ships.

Each year, ACCTS ships up to 10 containers. The goods for the containers are dropped off year-round, but the busiest times are the three weeks following Easter and the Canadian



In September 2019, Gladys Jeffrey, Kathy McFarland, Marilyn Barnes, and Sandra Barnett traveled to Zambia to help with the ACCTS shipment.

Thanksgiving, when the majority of shipments are loaded and sent out. At these times, a squad of on-site volunteers check inventory, pack boxes, operate forklifts, and load the containers. Outside of these routine times, ACCTS occasionally sends special shipments for disaster

relief or extenuating circumstances. ACCTS is a large operation, and MSC’s Gerrit Van Essen, the coordinator, oversees all of it.

What we did

In early April 2019, I listened to ACCTS volunteers express amazement at the amount of work required to unpack and sort all of the ACCTS boxes once they arrive in Zambia, which they observed while on a missions trip to Chitokoloki Mission Hospital. As they are able, Ruth Hanna (*Missionary Prayer Handbook* Day 4) and a few others organize and carry out most of this work. After praying about helping, I emailed Ruth to discuss the

possibility of bringing a small group to assist with unpacking and sorting. By the end of April, we decided that a team of four women would travel to Chitokoloki to aid this work for a couple of weeks. We arrived on the last Saturday of September, and the container we hoped to help unpack reached the mission station that night. We praise the Lord for His miraculous timing. When Monday morning came, all hands were on deck to unload the container. And so our work began.

What we learned

The learning curve was steep for us. We discovered that Chitokoloki uses the vast majority of the clothing as payment for the workers at the hospital and on the grounds or for those who sell fruit and vegetables to the hospital for the patients’ meals. They work hard at the mission station or to grow the food, and they need to be paid with new or like-new items. Items that are stained, very dirty, or damaged are unusable and are disposed of. Because of the changing times and culture in Zambia, the items’ quality is more important now than it used to be.

We also learned that expired medical items are no longer usable in Zambia, so we disposed of the expired items. Disposing of clothing and expired medical items after their arrival was a shame as volunteers in North America spent much time packing them, MSC spent money to ship them, and the missionaries had to remove them.

During the trip, we realized, too, that we could ease the burden of sorting all the goods if we packed them differently. While at Chitokoloki, we spent most of our time repacking the boxes, putting like with like. If the items are boxed properly before shipping, we can save the missionaries many hours of work.

In some ways, the trip was very hard. The October heat was extreme, and three of us became ill. We had hoped to come in cooler weather, but coordinating five schedules prevented us from doing so. Yet we were aware of the Lord’s leading, from the timing of the container’s arrival to the opportunities to observe and participate in the Lord’s work in Zambia to the ways He taught and cared for us.

How it works

- 1** Before the boxes arrive at the warehouse, people put a lot of work into filling them. Volunteers, such as women's missionary groups, and individuals collect or make needed items.
- 2** Once people fill their boxes, they usually deliver them to the warehouse in person or by commercial carriers.
- 3** At the MSC warehouse, volunteers help sort boxes of clothing, medical supplies, and other needed items.
- 4** The ACCTS team puts the organized boxes into larger boxes and loads them into the shipping container.
- 5** The container travels to Namibia and then to Chingola, Zambia, where it is offloaded onto trucks. Then, it arrives at the mission station, where workers unload the boxes.
- 6** Missionaries or volunteers empty the boxes and sort the contents.
- 7** The items are repacked and placed on shelves at the mission station.
- 8** Finally, the goods are ready to be used to pay nationals for their work.

How you can help

On MSC's website (MSCCanada.org/accts), you can find additional information about the ACCTS program, including a current list of needed items, sewing patterns for needed items like diapers, guidelines for packing boxes, and information on delivering boxes to the MSC facilities, whether you are in Canada or the US. Sending supplies through ACCTS is a wonderful way to serve the Lord from home and bless the missionaries and nationals at the same time. They are grateful for each one who serves in this way. ■

Marilyn and Phil Barnes are members of the MSC Canada WorkerCare team.



ACCTS GUIDELINES

Thank you to all those who packed boxes for Zambia or are interested in doing so. The information below will help you gather, pack, and ship the appropriate items. Visit MSCCanada.org/accts for additional details.

TWO KINDS OF BOXES

ACCTS ships boxes designated for specific mission workers or for the ministry at Chitokoloki Mission Hospital.

For a specific worker

Before sending items to a mission worker, contact them directly to ensure that you are sending what they need. It costs about \$30 to ship each box to Zambia, after which the worker pays to have it transported to them. It's vital that whatever is sent is worth the cost to ACCTS and to the worker, either due to the items' value or their limited availability in Africa.

For Chitokoloki

Most of the items listed in the following section are essential to the hospital's operation. These items are more valuable than cash to the local people since there is nowhere nearby to buy similar goods. The station gives the items to local staff members as payment or exchanges them for food for the hospital.

ITEMS TO SEND

Chitokoloki has requested the following items:

Clothing

Please include only items that are clean and in new or like-new condition. Stained or damaged items are disposed of. No clothing sized XL or larger is needed. Due to the culture's emphasis on modesty, please do not send women's shorts, pants, athletic wear, or sheer tops, dresses, or skirts. The following items are needed:

- Baseball caps
- Boys' clothing
- Bras
- Canvas shoes
- Children's shorts
 - For school sports activities.
- Men's jeans
- School shoes
 - Black or brown, all styles and sizes. Pack in a separate box marked "school shoes."
- Underwear
 - New in packages. All children's sizes; adult small and medium sizes only.



Nonmedical items

- Plastic milk-bag mats (See website for instructions.)
- Children's books and DVDs
 - Avoid anything with magic, spells, or masks. Culturally, these are associated with witchcraft. This includes many Disney products.
- Pillowcases and sheets
 - Any size or color.
- Cloth diapers (See website for sewing pattern.)
- Reusable sanitary pads (See website for sewing pattern.)
- Towels and washcloths
 - Any color, quick-dry or lightweight towels.

Medical items

By law, outdated items cannot be used. Please confirm that expiration dates are at least one year after the shipping date. Anything requiring electricity or electronic equipment is unusable. The following items are currently needed:

- Baby formula, powdered
- Crutches, all sizes
- Disposal containers for sharp objects
- Ensure, powdered
- Gauze pads, rolls, and bandages
- Wheelchairs, adult or small sizes

PACKING AND LABELING BOXES

Follow these guidelines to ensure your boxes are prepared properly. Visit MSCCanada.org/accts for additional information.

1. Check specific needs.

Before sending an item not listed here or on the MSC website, please contact a mission worker first to make sure it is needed.

2. List contents.

On the outside of the box, list all items enclosed.

3. Group categories.

Group similar items in the same box. See the MSC website for categories.

4. Don't seal variety boxes.

If you are hand delivering a box of dissimilar items, leave the box unsealed. ACCTS volunteers will repack your items with other similar items.

5. Label sender name.

Write your name or your assembly's name on the box so ACCTS volunteers can contact you with questions.