

## Update from Zambia

July 4<sup>th</sup>, 2021

Dear friends,

For much of the past year we have been able to report that Covid has largely spared Zambia. We have had a few theories as to why, and, overall, simply been grateful and relieved.

Then, in a blink –so it seems - everything changed. The delta variant was reported in Zambia, and within a few weeks cases began to spike. The WHO recently adjusted the country's rating from "2" to "4" – the highest rating. Adding to the struggle: only 148,000 doses of AstraZeneca for a country of 15 million. Further: a culture that is relationship oriented and with limited health care options. As our friend Roy Merritt recently wrote: *Unfortunately, Zambian culture demands that people assemble massively for weddings and funerals--and these occasions have been the source of many of these cases. Massive funerals create even more massive funerals. We have even stopped having church services together in the main building on campus, as so many of our adults -- teachers and staff-- including hospital staff--have Covid. What next?*

Schools have been closed for three weeks while school staff prepare for strict adherence to cleaning, mask wearing and distancing. They will return to class next week.

We know a growing number of Zambians who are fighting covid, and two people we know well have lost close family.

Please be praying for those who are sick, and for the blessing of vaccine to arrive soon – thank you!

Blessings,

Joan Mann

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