

MUJILA FALLS AGRICULTURE CENTRE E-MAIL BULLETIN MAY, 2014

“WELL DONE GOOD AND FAITHFUL SERVANT”

THE LIFE AND TIMES OF TSHALA F. MWENGO (1972-2014)

When my wife and I were assigned to Musokatanda, Zaire (D.R.Congo) in 1995. We were assigned to do agriculture and family health work. In this very remote and impoverished village in southern Shaba (Katanga) Province, people were suffering from malnourishment and lack of agricultural knowledge. Tshala’s father became my manager after having worked for previous UMC Missionaries.



Figure 1Tshala in the driver's seat

When I met Tshala he was only 17 or 18 years of age and had just finished high school at a private Catholic Agriculture School. He was very serious and gifted in Agriculture, as well as being a very dedicated leader in the UMC Youth Group and in Church in general.

Tshala had a real knack for motivating everyone who met him. People liked to work for him and would follow him anywhere. I remember him organizing first a Sunday School and then organizing the children in the Sunday School to clear and plant a garden of peanuts. They had a great success and

on a given day they brought the harvest to the church. They first gave 10% to the Church and then they divided the remaining peanuts among the children according to the amount of time each had spent on the project. The children learned both to honor God and to realize that they would receive

the fruits of their work. It was a very practical lesson in the lives of those children and those who witnessed it.



Figure 2Tshala graduates from Africa University

get him into Africa University. There were no scholarships available so our project had to support him for five years because, then, Tshala didn't speak English and had to learn before he could begin regular class work.

In 1997 he was accepted at Africa University and followed five years to obtain his degree in Agriculture. In the meantime, after the fall of Mobutu in Congo, Roxanne and I began to pioneer the development of Mujila Falls in extreme North West Zambia. We had our dedication in 2000 and just a year later Roxanne was diagnosed with Ovarian Cancer and we were evacuated to the United

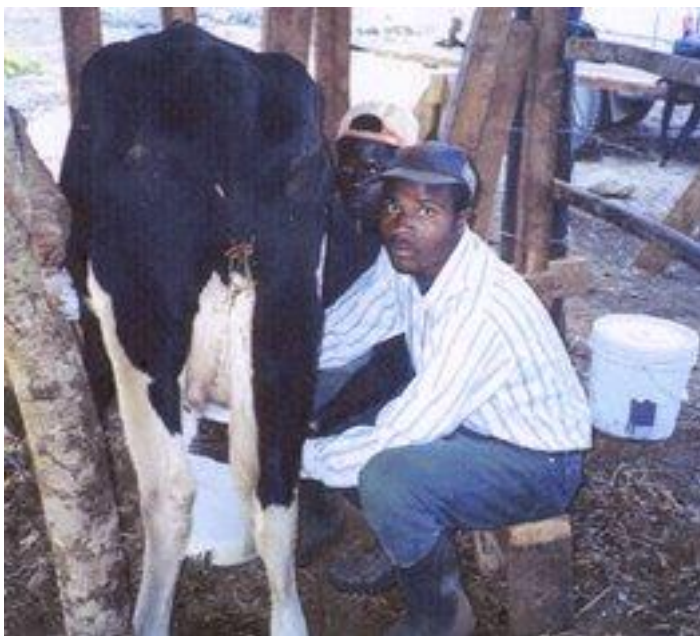


Figure 3Tshala milking our first cow at Mujila Falls

States. The project was in danger of collapse when I went back to see Tshala Graduate from Africa in 2003. We travelled together to Kitwe where I was storing my vehicle. I signed him onto my bank account and handed him the keys of my Toyota Landcruiser and I left to care for my dying wife. He successfully kept the farm going until I returned in 2006. Shortly later Tshala was made a Full Missionary by the GBGM and assigned to Mujila Falls as my Co-Director.

His was always challenging us to expand and to develop more of the 2000 acres that was granted to us by Chief Kanyama. He excelled in outreach and even started the Mama Roxanne Pre-School to help the area children. We saw a great reduction in malnutrition and infant mortality during his time at Mujila. Chief Kanyama's area went from being last in Corn production to being first in Corn Productions. Many, many people in the area were able to improve their homes, send their children to school by selling the surplus they suddenly were able to produce.

Eventually, he came to me saying that he had a dream to go on for higher education. He said he wanted to go to Mulengwishi, the United Methodist Seminary in Zaire, but I assumed he said that because it was the only UMC school that he was aware of. I told him his greatest gifts were in Agriculture and that most of the pastors were starving to death. I told him about Africa University in Zimbabwe and his opportunity to get a degree in Agriculture and help all of the pastors in Zaire as well as their congregations to feed themselves and have income generating jobs.

Roxanne and I made the commitment to raise the funds and do everything in our power to

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Figure 4Tshala giving out certificates to students at farm.

Tshala was a strong believer in education and convinced even adult United Methodists in the area to go back to school to get a 12th grade diploma. They are all now leaders in the community.

Tshala did this while balancing family life with his wife, Betty, and two children Lance and Shane who lived in Kitwe. He was on his way from our site to see his family when the accident occurred.

He had great plans for Mujila Falls Agriculture Centre; even the creation of a formal agriculture school. He was already inviting students from Africa University to do their practicals at our site every year and many of these have succeeded in their lives due to that experience.

He and his wife were principal founders of Living Word Chapel in Kitwe, which is the first English Language United Methodist Church in Zambia.

He was delegate twice, to General Conference and served the Conference in many ways. His shadow was very large over both Zambia and D.R. Congo, having even done trainings in Lodja in Central D.R.Congo.



Figure 5At dedication of new UM Church. The last time I heard Tshala Preach. The topic was "courage to follow Christ".

Tshala was born in 1972 and died on April 9, 2014. He is buried at Mujila Falls where he shares his grave with the ashes of my wife, Roxanne Conrad Webster who died on January 27, 2004.



Figure 6Tshala shares his grave with the ashes of my late wife, Roxanne Conrad Webster who died in 2004.

We have two saints looking over Mujila Falls Agriculture Centre.

PAUL AND ANDRE BEGIN ITINERATION IN U.S.

On Saturday, May 10th, Andre and I will arrive in Atlanta, GA for a week of required medical check-ups. We will then use a leased car to visit churches in Alabama, North Carolina and Maryland as we move up the East Coast to New York for consultation with our bosses at GBGM. We will then travel on to the West Michigan and Wisconsin Annual Conferences where I have been invited to speak at the Bishop's Missions Dinner.

What will follow will be visits to supporting churches in Wisconsin, Minnesota, and the West Michigan and Detroit Conferences through out the summer and fall. We plan to be back in Zambia around the 10th of October.

If your Church Congregation is currently supporting our project or if you would like to support our project in the future, this is the time to contact your District Missions Chair to get on the schedule of visits.

We look forward to seeing as many of you as possible.

BE SURE TO CHECK OUT OUR FACE BOOK PAGE

Our Face Book Page for Mujila Falls Agriculture Centre is updated at least weekly and contains photos and stories of what we are doing at the moment. We have many photos of the recent death and funeral of Tshala Mwengo as well as the VIM Team from Richmond, Indiana which has just left. Use this link to quickly get to the site:

<https://www.facebook.com/MujlaFallsAgCentre>

Also, feel free to comment, ask questions, provide advice, etc. This page should be a two-way street. Supporting Churches have never been closer to the cutting edge of Mission than they are today with almost instant communications with missionaries in the field. Take advantage of it.

Also, please feel free to download pictures and stories for your Church Newsletters, Bulletin Boards, etc.

VIM TEAM FROM RICHMOND, INDIANA AN UNQUALIFIED SUCCESS

In the wake of Tshala's untimely death, I decided that the long planned VIM Team from one of his sponsoring churches should not be cancelled. We found rental vehicles to take the place of Tshala's car, and shuffled schedules to make it all work out.



Figure 7VIM Team pose with Chief Kanyama. Doris was absent due to broken leg.

Despite an accident on the first day at Mujila Falls that left Doris Miller with a broken leg, we continued to achieve all of the goals set by the team. They painted several rooms in the missionary house, led a training for pastors and lay leaders, held a one day sewing and crochet retreat for area United Methodist Women, preached a Sunday service at a local church, had an audience with our Chief Kanyama, worshiped with our workers, and produced footage for videos that will be edited once back in the U.S. We plan to dedicate the resulting video to the life of Tshala Mwengo.

APPEAL FOR CONTINUED FUNDING OF MUJILA FALLS AGRICULTURE CENTRE

With the death of Tshala Mwengo, we have had to quickly restructure management at Mujila Falls to insure that purchases and deliver of essential items for our livestock and activities continue on a regular basis. Missionary Sandy Groves and New Life Center Project Manager, Charles Mulemena have been added as signatories on our project bank account. Betty Tshala will help out with purchasing and sending out trucks to Mujila Falls and our Site Manager, Hamilton, will be placing orders and receiving shipments from the Copper belt. With both cell phone and satellite communications at Mujila Falls, I will also be able to check in regularly with Hamilton, Charles, Sandy and Betty to insure that the system continues to work in my absence.

I am appealing to all of my supporting churches to be sure to keep the donations to Advance Special 15016A coming. We must be sure that we can pay our feed and transportation bills

for the short term while building up a reserve to buy fertilizer, seed, and fuel for the upcoming planting season.

We will have to curtail some of our projects in the short-term with the hope that we will receive new missionaries to fill in the gaps left by Tshala's death.

Your Prayers are always called for and appreciated.

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Paul L. Webster". The signature is written in a cursive style with a large initial 'P' and a long, sweeping underline.

Paul L. Webster