

## **Max McLeish (Music) – Zambia, Summer 2018**

For two and a half weeks this July I stayed in Zambia with a group of ten students and two student workers from Holy Trinity Church, Cambridge. Whilst there we linked up with an organisation called the Jubilee Centre which helped to support the local churches. Before travelling up to the Jubilee Centre's headquarters in Ndola in the North of Zambia we spent a day in the capital, Lusaka. This was essentially our planning day for the rest of the trip, as we prepared a set of seminars that we were to give in a number of settings to the local youth. A slightly daunting task at first, but the day set the tone for the rest of the trip as we would be pushed out of our comfort zones in ways such as preparing and delivering talks/workshops to large groups. It also set the tone for leaning on to God's provision for us, which was evident throughout the trip.

The first week was spent delivering these seminars around Lusaka and then Ndola. We were blown away by the passion that the young people had for issues such as national development and career opportunities, and the eloquence with which they spoke about them. In particular, the junior parliament based in Ndola were in inspiration to be around, as we joined with them to discuss a number of issues. One such issue was plastic recycling which was practically non-existent. A talk from ZEMA (Zambia Environmental Managing agency) proved to be a helpful time of seeing where the country was heading in terms of their recycling. This led on to a talk and discussion which we led on leadership, particularly looking at the characteristics of Christian leaders.

One thing that particularly stood out for me throughout the trip was the quality and the joy in the music making. As a musician I always love to hear new music, but also people enjoying music in a community. This was certainly evident in the communities and in the churches -- in some areas these were synonymous due to the largely Christian population. The corporate music making always had a genuine joy about it, representative of the good news of the gospel that united them, whether there was a large band involved or all A Cappella. I had the privilege of being able to join in with a jam session with some of the youth at one conference, as well as leading times of worship during the church services each Sunday and at the start and end of each day. Meeting fellow musicians in Zambia certainly made me feel privileged to have the opportunity to have music as a career, whereas that is not an option in their country. Having chatted to a few of them about musical projects they are involved in, it was inspiring to see what they still managed to fit in.

After these days of seminars, we had a couple of more practical days painting the interior of a local church, equating to around £500 of labour. We then had the pleasure of attending the service at the newly decorated church the following Sunday. A final lasting experience came in visiting a local village and spending time with the locals. Having worked at a children's activity centre on my gap year, it was a joy to spend time with the children in the village. The language barrier was quickly overcome by lots of singing and dancing!

I am very grateful to the college for helping me to be able to go on this trip. It was an incredibly thought-provoking and inspiring time and is certainly only the start of my association with the country.