

DRU'S VIEWS
Sixteenth Edition – May 2009
Mothers Day

These selected verses from Proverbs 31 (taken from *The Message*) seem to depict the typical Zambia woman.

(13) She shops around for the best yarns and cottons and enjoys knitting and sewing... (15) She's up before dawn, preparing breakfast for her family and organizing her day. (16) She looks over a field and buys it, then, with money she's put aside, plants a garden. (17) First thing in the morning, she dresses for work, rolls up her sleeves, eager to get started... (20) She's quick to assist anyone in need, reaches out to help the poor. (27) She keeps an eye on everyone in her household, and keeps them all busy and productive. (30)...The woman to be admired and praised is the woman who lives in the Fear-of-God.

Zambian women, of necessity, are diligent in finding the means to provide for their families. Women head many households, as men are absent due to early death or divorce. A majority of men are unemployed and have despaired, having lost their sense of dignity, and often they turn to alcohol, drugs, or other women to pacify their feelings of inadequacy, leaving their wives to strive to provide food, shelter, clothing, medical care and school fees for their children. The women sell sundry items such as charcoal, salt, or vegetables on the road in front of their house. They knit or crochet baby layettes. They sell homemade scones or fritters, boiled eggs, popcorn. If I drive to town before the sun rises, I see many women walking the 6 km or more, carrying large, heavy



baskets of vegetables, fish or other products they will sell at the central market. They will not return until after dark. Some work long days in the fields, babies tied to their backs. Because of the labor-intensive requirements of running a household, mothers must teach their children to help. Every day I see children as young as 6 or 7 walking to the nearest water source carrying heavy containers to be filled for the day—some as large as 20 liters. The children take care of their younger siblings, prepare and cook meals, do the laundry and keep the house clean while Mom or Auntie is out trying to make some meager income.

Even as she is busy managing her household, the Zambian woman will take time to help a friend or neighbor who is in need. She will watch another's children, comfort her when she is sick or mourning a death in the family, share what little food she has with someone who has less. It is the women who fill the church on Sundays; meet two or three times during the week to fellowship together; visit the sick or prospective members; practice with the choir and clean the church to prepare it for worship. The Zambian woman surely is one to be admired and praised! I salute her.

Lifesong School

We started our second term of the school year on May 4. Although we invited the children to come to school during the April break so they could eat and enjoy some activities, many of our children were absent because they were helping their families in the fields; it is harvest time for peanuts and maize, the major crops. Some went to visit relatives in the village or other compounds. By the third week of school, we were near full attendance. We are still struggling with malaria and other illnesses; on any given day you will find two or three children in the sick bay. We hired a part-time nurse, but after one month she found she was too busy with other commitments, so we are still searching.

Our school manager, John Mumba, recently attended a meeting held by the Ministry of Education for private school administrators. The Senior Standards Officer, who is in charge of inspecting and licensing schools, cited Lifesong for our excellence in providing an environment which is conducive to education. She mentioned our smaller class sizes, availability of books and learning materials, our physical structures and furnishings, and our ministry to the whole child through feeding, health care and spiritual training. She told those who are running fee-paying schools that she wished they could come and visit our school to see what we are doing with limited resources. She is bringing extra personnel for our annual inspection in June, because she wants them to see the kind of standards they should be looking for in private schools.

An extra hour has been added to our school day this term to allow for more sports programs, art classes, a school choir, and a Praise and Worship session. We have planted our vegetable gardens, and soon the children will be working there to learn how they can grow their own food.

Kafuti

“My Children”

Kafuti spent Mothers Day weekend with me at Kafakumba. He is a typical teenage boy—eats everything in sight, stays up late at night watching movies or studying, sleeps most of the day! But he is truly a joy to have around. He discovered grilled cheese sandwiches over the weekend, but couldn't remember the name of them; he kept asking me for a “grease” sandwich.

Benson has submitted his application to the Kitwe School of Nursing. He should hear by the end of this month if he will be called for interviews in June and possibly be admitted



for the July intake. In the meantime, he will be working part time at Lifesong School; our previous nurse has offered to train him in some basic first aid and health care, and he will help in teaching children to read and wherever else needed.

The other former street children have all returned to school following their break. Of the 6, five will be writing critical exams in November. I am paying for extra lessons for all of them, since the teaching in the normal school day is not adequate to prepare them for the exams. Kafuti, who is in grade 12, told me that he had one teacher who did not show up for class for 6 weeks!

Life at Kafakumba

Pastors' School started May 11 at Kafakumba. With nearly 100 pastors from Zambia and the Congo in attendance with their wives and children, it is a noisy place. I'm enjoying the activity, the singing and drum playing and just the happy sounds that come over the wall fence into my window. The school will run until the end of June. Teachers are from the US and Congo and come with the highest credentials.

Somehow I don't have to go looking for children; they seem to find me. I have a steady stream of children at my house from the neighboring farms. They come to fetch water and look for small jobs they can do to earn money for school books, shoes or



whatever else they need. Two little boys, Felix (age 7) and Gordon (age 6) (*see photo*) come daily. They are cousins; Felix is a double orphan and the nephew of Gordon's mother. They are usually barefoot and sometimes shirtless even in this cooler weather; they are filthy dirty and often smell of urine—they probably sleep in their clothes at night, and many children here have problems with bed wetting. However, they are as sweet as can be. They love for me to give them some plain paper, pens and crayons. I've seen them spend two hours drawing and coloring without making a sound—they whisper so they don't disturb me while I'm working. The other day, I gave them some money for cleaning up rocks in the yard; I also gave them some candy. About an hour later they returned. When I answered their knock on the door, they both reached out their dirty little hands and offered me cookies (one half eaten). I cut up some apples for them and sat down on the porch while we shared our treats. (Of course I ate the cookies! What's a little dirt?)

Patricia, Terese and I have all been sick, and our busy schedules have not allowed us to meet with the ladies at Fisenge for the past month. However, they continue with their sewing projects under the guidance of their secretary, and the social welfare officer is coming to conduct the literacy classes. A similar program has now been started with the ladies from Baluba Village. We hope to return to meet with them all after Pastors' School is finished.

Sneak Peaks

- One of the difficult obstacles I face in communication is not knowing enough of the local language. Another obstacle is problems the Zambians have pronouncing some English words. The other day, Jonathan and Kelvin were telling me some of the books they need for school. I thought they were saying they needed an "address book" and couldn't figure out why. Finally, they told me they needed a "book with maps;" i.e. an atlas!
- A couple of weeks ago I went on an instant weight loss plan; it's called malaria. Yes, it struck me, too. Fortunately, the symptoms were not severe, it just wouldn't go away. I'm grateful for my friends Tamlyn, who came to spend a day with me and forced me to eat and drink plenty of fluids, and Lorraine Enright, who kept me supplied with her delicious homemade chicken and noodle soup.
- President Barack Obama is quite a popular personality in Zambia. I think many people believe he will solve all of the world's problems. I've seen his name and photo on posters, baseball hats, clothing, printed chitenge fabrics, and the other day I noticed one of the strip malls in Ndola has been renamed "Obama Complex."

Prayer Requests

- Continued prayers are needed for the health and welfare of our Lifesong children and their guardians. We have parents who are quite sick, most likely with HIV/AIDS. As we enter the cold season, the children will be fighting respiratory illnesses, since many do not have blankets or warm clothes to wear.
- Pray for Lifesong's registration with the government as a Nongovernmental Organization (NGO). Our attorney has been working on this cumbersome process for nearly a year. We need this registration to be able to operate in an official capacity.
- Please pray for the Lifesong administrative staff in Gridley, Illinois. As the economic crisis continues, they will need to work extra hard to raise the funds needed to continue our projects to help needy orphans around the world.
- Pray for the women of Zambia who are caring for millions of children—their own and also orphaned grandchildren, nieces and nephews, younger brothers and sisters. They are to be commended for their commitment, hard work and perseverance.

In His service,

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