

**DRU'S VIEWS**  
**Twenty-third Edition – February 2010**

*“Father of orphans and protector of widows is God in his holy habitation.” Psalm 68:5(NRSV)*

It is estimated that there are over 1 million orphans in Zambia. Usually the father dies first, and a few years later the mother is gone. Children are divided up and taken in by already impoverished relatives, adding to the growing burden of survival. The scourge of AIDS takes its toll, leaving fatherless children and destitute widows in its wake. It is an overwhelming task to look after these children and give them a chance to achieve their potential; we must all take notice and do whatever we can, by whatever means we can, whenever we can (paraphrased from John Wesley). Lifesong for Orphans is attempting to do just that.

***Lifesong School***

January took its toll on our budget and our emotions, and so far February has not seen any improvement. The problem? Malaria. It is a devastating and, in children, an often fatal disease spread by the bite of mosquitos. In Zambia it is the number one cause of death. We have hired a registered nurse, Cristobel Bulanda, to oversee medical care for the children this year, and she has been a blessing to all of us. However, since our infirmary is not yet registered with the Ministry of Health, she is limited in the procedures she is allowed to perform. She can treat wounds and do diagnostics. In mild cases, she can distribute pain killers, cough syrups and even test and prescribe some malarial drugs. However, the more serious cases must be referred to a private clinic in town. Often the children are rushed to the clinic with extremely high fevers, vomiting and diahrrea. If not treated immediately, the malaria can move to the brain, causing convulsions and eventually death. This is what took the life of one of our children, Mapalo (Blessings), last year in March. So there is no time to waste. Here is a picture of our two beds in the sick bay; there are four sick children in one and three in the other! Just a normal day!



Cristobel has been so overwhelmed that she has not yet had time to do our regular weighing, measuring and de-worming of the children. However, last month she

invited the parents for an educational meeting; there were nearly 100 parents who attended. They learned about why we deworm the children; proper hygiene; malaria cause, prevention and treatment; and other health issues. Health education for families will be a regular part of our program.

I strongly believe that, were it not for Lifesong School, many of these children would not be alive today. Christian has just completed his treatment for TB and has been pronounced completely cured; Patricia is in her last month of TB medications. Catherine, a new student this year, is under isolation because we discovered she has hepatitis; she will return to school next year. We have started a new class for children with disabilities or who are just slow learners and need help to catch up with their peers. Clement is almost totally deaf and is learning sign language; two of the children in this class have disabilities resulting from cerebral malaria.



One of our precious new children is 5-year-old William. He was born with deformed feet and ankles and walks on the side of his feet. He can walk only for a short distance, so his older brother carries him to school on his back. Some of the other children have started helping him. One day I saw him sadly watching his friends on the sliding board; I picked him up and set him on the top so he could slide down. I saw one of his rare smiles that day! The surgeon says he can put together a team and do orthopedic surgery locally, estimating about a 35 percent improvement. However, I'm not ready to settle for that. If anyone knows of an organization in the United States or other first-world country that provides transportation and hospital costs for children such as William, please let me know. It would have to be through a recognized charity, such as Samaritan's Purse Heart Project, in order to get travel visas for William, a parent and an interpreter. It is a long shot, but I know that somewhere there is someone who can help.



***Twikatani Women's Project***

Because it is the busiest time of year for people to work in their fields, the women took a break after Christmas and have just reconvened in February. I haven't had much time to visit them, but when I do, I get energized by the excitement I feel in the room. God continues to bless these hard working women and has now rewarded them by bringing two accomplished seamstresses to Kafakumba. Alison Raymond and Caroline Webster arrived last fall with their husbands, who are running an elementary school. These ladies are teaching the women proper sewing techniques that will set their work above that of the average tailors in Zambia. When I visited them last week, they were learning three different styles of seams.

### **Critters**

One of the “joys” of living in Zambia is the many critters that invade my house and surroundings. There are flies; cockroaches (found one INSIDE my mosquito net one night); huge and tiny spiders; and termite wings that fall off every night, litter the floor and are even found in my washing machine. I also have walking sticks, praying mantises, lizards and geckos (love them because they eat the mosquitoes), large slimy snails, and other interesting shapes and sizes of bugs—some fly, some crawl and others just sit there and look at you.



I've started photographing some of them, and it is amazing the varieties I find. Of course, I don't bother to ponder over the wonders of the ants that I find in my tea kettle every morning, but I do marvel at the beauty of the many butterflies

and moths that welcome me each morning when I walk out my door. One day at Lifesong School, I was sharing some of my photos with my special little friend, Mwape. He ran outside and a few minutes later he came back with three different moths to present to me as a gift! Another day at Kafakumba, I went inside the house to get candy for my regular visiting children. When I returned outside, I found them crawling over the front porch chasing something. I soon realized that there were lots of giant termites! I got sandwich bags so they could take their prey home to eat. (Don't turn up your nose. Termites are quite nutritious, and when dried and fried are very delicious!)

One morning while out on my front porch, I spotted a beautiful and unusual moth at my feet. It was dark red and brown with a velvet brocade effect. I admired it for a minute and then rushed into the house to get a camera. When I got back, it was gone. I thought, “How often do I rush around taking care of ‘business’ without stopping to admire God's creation—the beauty that surrounds us each day?” While pondering this question, I started to wonder why God made some creatures so beautiful and some so ugly or ridiculous (could be said of people, too, I suppose). Why did God create flies (all over my house)? I realize the millions of ants are cleaning up the dead termites for me, but why flies??? Then it came to me—so that frogs will have something to eat! Later I did get a photo of this moth; have you ever seen anything like this?



### **Sneak Peaks**

- I heard about two of our boys who were collecting plastic bottles to sell; there is no formal recycling program here, but people use the bottles to re-sell cooking oil and other goods they buy wholesale. It reminded me of when I was a child, and we used to search for pop bottles we could exchange for 2 cents to buy candy. (I'm dating myself!)
- Story heard on the radio: An organization was having a banquet. About halfway through the meal, the leader realized they had not said a blessing over the food. He asked a pastor in the group to lead them in a belated prayer—he prayed, ‘Bless the Lord, O my soul, and all that is within me...’

### **Prayer Requests**

- For Lifesong School staff and children as we battle numerous illnesses every day, among both the children and staff. We are determined not to lose any children this year to malaria or any other disease.
- That help will be found for little William so that someday he can run and play with his friends without pain or falling.
- For the former street children and others I've been helping to support, that they will be successful in their studies; that Kafuti will receive good exam results; and that the funding will be available to meet all of their needs. (I am sending out a special letter on this issue.)
- For individuals who are considering long-term commitments to work with Lifesong and Kafakumba Training Center.
- Personal requests for my family and myself as we struggle with separation and being obedient to God's call on our lives.

In my church program, we have a paraphrase of the Lord's Prayer that I really like. It goes like this:

*Our Father in Heaven, Holy is your name! Let the Kingdom of God come to us and let us work together to build your Kingdom here on earth as it is in Heaven. We thank you, Lord, for giving us every day the things that we need to live. Forgive us our sins as we forgive those who sin against us. Help us to love each other and to be faithful disciples of Jesus Christ. We pray this in the name of Jesus our Savior. Amen.*

Yes, let us work together to build God's Kingdom here on earth as it is in Heaven. And thank you, Lord, for giving us not what we *want* but what we *need* to live! And help us be faithful disciples of Christ by loving one another. Amen!

In His service,

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