



*“Christian Development Spanning Generations”*

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Hello Everyone,

This month I would like to begin refreshing your memory of conditions in Zambia. All land in the country is divided between that which is controlled by the 73 different tribal chiefs, and that which is controlled by the government. No one ‘owns’ his own land. At best they are granted, after paying lots of fees, either a 15 or a 99 year lease – at the end of which time the government may decide to repossess it. When a chief grants a parcel of land, it may be taken back at his/ her discretion. (Yes, I know of at least one female chief.) As you can imagine, this prevents many outside organizations from obtaining land to begin a project or constructing a base of operations. Bridge took the option to obtain a parcel of land, deciding that what we were able to do in that amount of time would be worth it. That is the 50 acres we are trying to develop, and on which the community school is currently being constructed. Because the chiefs control such a large part of what happens in the country, the government created a special branch for them called the Council of Chiefs. They meet regularly at the capital to advise and report to Parliament and the President.

With the exception of the few cities, virtually all of the land is tilled – by hand and hard labor, and mostly by women – their one tool a heavy cast-iron over-sized hoe. For many, their only sustenance for the entire year relies on their labor – and that, of course, is dependent on God’s grace and the weather. There are a few large-scale farming operations in the southern part of the country and a few large cattle ranches, but these are in the minority. This sector is considered to be the potentially sustainable alternative to copper mining as a foreign exchange earner. The agricultural resources in the country offer the unrealized potential that needs to be fully exploited. The abundance of quality arable land, easily accessible water and the ideal climate and range of environment provide the potential for the growing and exporting of agricultural and horticultural produce. Principal crops include corn, millet, sorghum, beans and cassava, wheat, peanuts, sugar cane, sunflower seed, rice, cotton, tobacco, and horticultural produce. A few pineapple, and many banana plantations are to be found. Fishing is carried out in various parts of the country and provides considerable income for the farmer, while cattle rearing and other small livestock play an important role in the country’s food basket.

Rarely will you find a woman age 40 or older who has had any formal education whatsoever. To this day, boys are preferred over girls to attend school by virtue of the fact that parents lack school fees, and money for uniforms or books. Of those who are fortunate enough to begin school, most drop out at the end of sixth grade. Some of this is due to financial inability, but in these days many fail to continue due to either one or both parents having died from AIDS. The rare and privileged few who manage to graduate from university usually leave the country to seek more lucrative positions.

Zambia is producing orphans at a phenomenal rate. Currently it is predicted that there are over 1.1 million orphans in the country (07 stats) – and the number rises daily. There are precious little resources for orphans, and those who are not taken in by one of them are either farmed out to relatives (where many times they are mistreated) or, once they are old enough, become street children. And pity those who are blind, lame, or mentally challenged. It is a sad plight for the children there, and one which needs desperate attention. This is one reason we have fought so hard to establish a community school in Kasongo. It is a drop in the bucket, yet for those 80 or so who are getting that drop, it is a true blessing. I will continue with further information next time.

God bless you abundantly,  
Ruth for the entire Bridge Team

We invite you to visit us at [www.bridgeinternationalzambia.org](http://www.bridgeinternationalzambia.org) for an up-to-date account of what God has accomplished through us for the Kingdom since we began Bridge in 2005.

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You may send support by check to Bridge International, 78 Brookside Drive, Terre Haute, IN 47802.

-OR- You may make a bank transfer directly to our ministry account in Zambia. For simple instructions on how to do this please contact me at [mcclintock\\_ruth@yahoo.co.uk](mailto:mcclintock_ruth@yahoo.co.uk), or write to the address above. **Either way is tax deductible.** Thank you!

*“Not a hand-out, but a hand up”*