

Dear

Hi again from Zambia. We are coming to the tail end of the rainy season here now, and the weather is a lot cooler though still pretty clammy and humid. Hopefully by the end of March we will have seen the last of the rain till next December, and we can expect it to get cooler up to July and then begin to warm up again.

It seems a lot longer than 6 weeks since we left Scotland and came back home, but we have settled into our normal routine again. Nicholas, Sarah and Rachel are back at school, and the great time they had in Scotland is a fond memory now. Christine has restarted clinics at two local hospitals, and is as much in demand as ever. I am back into the swing of things at Zambian Airways, and we are gearing up for a busy tourist season starting in April. It was so nice to see so many of you when we were home, and to realise that we were still remembered by you. We feel very humbled to think we are in so many people's prayers.

Our efforts to help the street boys continue to grow beyond our expectations, and sometimes we wonder where it will all end up, but we are very glad to be able to do something to help a few. All of them have such sad stories, and there are actually very few who are on the street through choice. Even a little help can make such a difference to them.

I thought I would begin a series choosing one boy at a time, and telling you a little about him, with a picture, so you could begin to pray for "our lads" as individuals. I have started with a boy of 16 called Mabvuto (pronounced Ma-VOO-toe). This boy has really touched our hearts. His name means "suffering", and he really is appropriately named. A very attractive looking youngster, I was struck by his distant, withdrawn outlook on life. His English is relatively good, so I have been able to speak to him personally, and I was shocked at how much bitterness and anger he has stored up inside him. Unlike many of the other boys, he actually has a "home" of sorts. His father died many years ago, and his mother remarried. I assumed that there was tension between Mabvuto and his step-father - a very common occurrence out here - but in fact the problem is between him and his mother, who seems to have developed a vicious dislike for her own son. Obviously we cannot know the full story, or why this might have happened, but there is little doubt that Mabvuto has been rejected, and feels it keenly. Things got so bad that his step-father has tried to intervene on his behalf, and remonstrated with the mother over her abuse of her son. This sort of action by a step-father is almost unheard of here, but unfortunately only appears to have made things worse. Soon there was no option for Mabvuto, but to try and survive on the street. Against that background of rejection, he has withdrawn into himself, but under the surface, his rage and humiliation are festering. Of all the boys I know, he worries me the most, as he is a walking time bomb, and at any time I am afraid he could explode. If he does, he will cause great damage to himself and others, as his anger could drive him to assault, rape or even murder. Please pray for him that he might find peace from his bitterness, and have some hope in life in place of all the hurt. We hope to be able to bring him to live with

us in our extended family, but it will take time for him to adjust and normalise - if indeed he ever can. In such circumstances, all we can do is try to show as much love as possible, and ask God to do the rest.

Our plans to extend our "home" for the boys, are accelerating rapidly - almost taking on a life of their own. At present we have 3 boys staying with us on a permanent basis. Many of you met Nicholas of course, whom we have formally adopted, so we cannot really continue referring to him as a street boy (as he keeps reminding us!). In addition we have Felix, who is badly disabled after being burnt badly when he was 9, and Smart. Both boys are 17. Felix now attends a special school where he is being taught how to use a knitting machine. This will give him a skill and a means of earning a living in the future. Smart is extremely fit, strong and hard working. He came to stay with us after 2 years on the street, and now works in our garden. We hope, after about a year of adjusting, we will be able to find training for him in mechanics and driving, and again give him a chance to make his way in the world. At present we only have space for one more boy, but we were faced with the problem of which one to choose. Word is getting round, and so many boys come to me asking for work, which I do not have for them. However, since returning from Scotland we have been toying with the idea of converting a disused chicken shed at the bottom of the garden into a dormitory for 6 boys, who would then have accommodation, food and safety and could begin to get into education and training. I am happy to say that we hope to go ahead with this idea, and that we reached the decision after seeing how much support you voiced when we were in Scotland. Indeed, if I may single out one group for special mention, I would like to say that the first costs for converting the dorm have been met from the generous donation we received from the Guild - well done ladies!

In addition to the dormitory project, we have now been able to start a school on Sunday afternoons for up to 20 boys, ranging from 8 up to 16 years old. This has been made possible by the wonderful provision of a partner in the work. Mr Simbeye is in fact Nicholas' school teacher. He is a lovely, godly man (even if I would not necessarily agree with some of his Pentecostal views!), with a heart for the boys, and found out about our project by "accident". When he saw that we invited the boys in on Sunday and let them bath, wash clothes, eat and swim in our pool, he volunteered to give up each Sunday afternoon to teach the boys basic literacy. It is amazing to see God bringing the people together from different places to make things work. Ultimately we would like to run this school every day, taking the boys in off the street, feeding and teaching them, and beginning to stabilize them before they get too lost. In the meantime we feel the Sunday class is a good start, and Mr Simbeye is able to teach and preach to the boys very simply in their own language.

As I said, sometimes all of this seems to be running away with us, and at times we get worried about how things will turn out. Please pray that:

- * we would have faith to trust God, and let Him do the planning;
- * Mr Simbeye would be a true father in faith to these youngsters;
- * we would be able to construct the dormitory as soon as possible, and

choose the right boys to stay there;

* our school would grow, and be provided with suitable teachers.

I have sent a "general epistle" to everybody, but we are delighted to hear from individuals as well. However, running the National Airline and looking after the extended family takes up most of my time, and Christine is even busier, so please bear with us if we cannot respond as quickly as you would like!

With all our love to you all

Don, Christine, Sarah, Rachel and Nicholas