

HELPING THE PEOPLE OF ANGOLA SINCE 1971

ANGOLA MEMORIAL SCHOLARSHIP FUND



AMSF Newsletter

THE PRESIDENT'S CORNER *by Rev. Etta Snow*



Rev. Etta Snow

For more than 30 years you, our faithful donors, through the Angola Memorial Scholarship Fund, have provided scholarships for over 400 Angolan students in the fields of Education, Medicine, Theology, Agriculture, Law and Sciences. When the Peace Accord was signed in 1992 after 27 years of Civil War, much of the infrastructure of the country had been destroyed. The leaders of the churches with whom we had worked were faced with the tremendous challenge of how to meet the needs of educating thousands of children and young people, with no access to educational facilities. In this desperate situation, AMSF responded enthusiastically to the challenges presented and shifted its focus from funding scholarships to funding re-development at the grass roots level. Previous newsletters have reported on how, through your generous support and contributions, you have made a tremendous difference in the lives of hundreds of Angolan students. Through Formation Schools (formerly called Vocational Schools) these students became self-sufficient by learning the basic skills of Reading, Writing, Home/Family Care and Health Education so they could cope with the struggle for daily survival.

This past June, at our Annual AMSF General Meeting, we became very aware of the fact that, while up to now, we have been able to give significant financial support to our Angolan church partners, AMSF is facing many challenges of its own. What of the future of AMSF and our hopes for the continuation of the Fund, when we consider the fact of our dwindling and aging membership and the consequent concerns for our diminishing support base? So, we did some concentrated brain-storming during these sessions to address these problems. One thing quickly became evident -- our Christian commitment to our Angolan brothers and sisters is irrevocable. The seeds of hope that were planted many years ago have borne much fruit. Today, more than ever, the Angolan churches need 'seeds of hope' and with your continued financial help and prayerful support, AMSF will continue with its mandate so that more 'seeds of hope' will continue to be planted and bloom again from the ashes of yesterday in the hearts and lives of these faithful and courageous people. This I firmly believe will happen. May it be your belief, too!

Maria Bonga, even as an Angolan school girl, was fascinated with lab work. She approached Dr Sid Gilchrist to work in the Bailundo mission hospital lab on her summer vacations and did so for 2 years. Dr Gilchrist supported Maria's vision of university education, which at that time, meant going abroad. Dr. Gilchrist and other missionaries facilitated Maria's receipt of a Centennial scholarship to begin her studies at Alma college in St. Thomas, ON. Maria obtained a chemistry degree from the University of Western Ontario and loved her subsequent work as a research assistant with an Ontario medical research team. To support her growing family, she then trained as a nurse with a specialty in hemodialysis. Close to the Gilchrist family, she was asked to join in creating the Gilchrist Memorial Scholarship Fund, now the AMSF, and has provided board and member level leadership to this day.



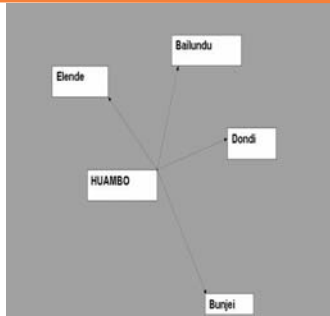
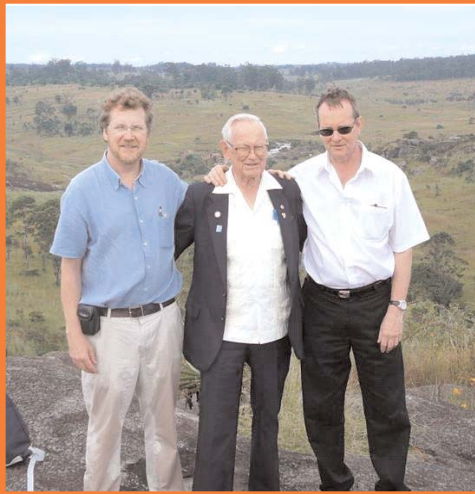
Maria Bonga at her daughter Essenje's wedding, 2006

Why I support the AMSF *by Maria Bonga*

It is because of some Angolan Missionaries' faith in me that I am in North America today, where years ago I came to pursue my higher studies. I have served on the Board of Directors of AMSF, on and off, since its inception. Through the years AMSF has sponsored the education of Angolan students as doctors, nurses, teachers, engineers and other important professions. Some of these former students are now national leaders in the rebuilding of Angola. Without the Fund's assistance this would not have been possible. I pray and hope that this benevolence does not end here and that we continue to support eager-to-learn Angolans, whether it be at the grassroots or at higher education levels.

Angola: Contrasts . . . and hope

By Bill Burgess



Burgess Angola Tour

Left: "The 3 Bs" - Bill, George and Ken Burgess on Kachiungu Mountain [Dondi]. The name refers to the sounds of the Kutatu Falls behind them.



I recently found myself back in the country where I was born, three decades after leaving in my teens. My brother Ken and I and father George spent three weeks in Angola this past April. We went to visit the 13 medical posts that have received basic medical supplies and drugs over the past 4 years in the first phase of a Rotary Club project initiated by George. The medical posts are operated by DASEP, the Department for Social Projects associated with the IECA church. The Rotary Club of Luanda is a local sponsor.

As my father put it, to the visitor Angola presents fantastic contrasts. Cell phone service is everywhere, but little or no garbage service. Luanda is super-charged, but the rural provinces are still more placid. I got my first tangible sense of Angola's national independence, because when I left it was still a Portuguese colony. Ken remarked that, given the decades of war, he had feared that conditions would be even worse.

Angola is certainly 'on the move'. At the celebrations of the third anniversary of the peace accords we heard cautious optimism about Angola's political future. Massive investments in infrastructure are underway, notably new roads. The identified de-mining effort is reported to be largely complete. The new railway from Benguela has almost reached Huambo, en route to linking Angola with all of eastern and southern Africa. Foreign contractors are everywhere, notably Chinese, but also European and Brazilian.

We saw many new schools and schools under construction. The newspapers reported that student enrolment has increased from 2.3 million in 2003 to over 5 million. IECA and DASEP-supported schools are operating in all the former mission stations, with ambitious plans to expand. Government support is available for teacher salaries, but little more.



George Burgess (centre) with doctors, nurses and lab technician at the IECA-DASEP medical post in Luanda..

Our focus was the medical posts, so from Luanda we travelled to Huambo, Dondi (Kachiungu), Bailundu, Elende, Bunjei and Benguela - Lobito. Everywhere we met people who had worked with or known George in Angola between 1954 and 1976. The DASEP medical posts are at various stages of development. They all exist by virtue of the dedication of



Dondi hospital, just reconstructed.

unpaid or underpaid staff, and cry out for more resources. Some have won partial government support, like salaries for nurses. The second phase of the Rotary support now underway will supply basic supplies and drugs for medical posts in three new locations for three years. In addition, two clinics will begin a pilot program of providing HIV/AIDS education, testing and counselling.



"Do the HIV test. The baby will appreciate it". Part of the national HIV campaign to reduce mother-to-baby transmission of HIV.

Angola still has a precious opportunity to avoid the terrible scale of HIV/AIDs in adjacent countries - if policies and programs can address the facts. Surveys report that by age 15 half of Angolans are sexually active. The current explosion in mobility is another factor, notably by refugees returning from adjacent countries, and easier travel on new roads and railway.

The government's five-year, \$150 million national program to fight AIDs includes public education, testing in provincial capitals (and sometimes beyond) and some treatment. The potentially important contribution of the DASEP medical posts is their location in poor shanty-town communities and rural provincial locations where official government services are almost entirely absent.

We found ourselves in the midst of the discussion underway within DASEP and IECA on the thorny moral and social issues related to HIV. Dr. Ken often cited the expert medical literature in support of Dr. George's analogies - that in the circumstances, the protective use of

condoms is as necessary as surgical gloves, and that the social stigma of HIV today should be compared to that of leprosy in Biblical times.

We spent several days in Bunjei, where DASEP's integrated rural development program has won recognition as a model for such efforts. I was able to observe a couple of days of internal evaluation. I gained some sense of their impressive work in agriculture, literacy, public health, well-digging, midwifery and civil rights in a dozen villages around the old Bunjei mission station. What I found even more impressive was the construction of leadership capacity that is clearly underway.



DASEP literacy class in a Bunjei village. During the years of war there were often no schools operating.

A recent, external evaluation report of DASEP voices my own impression, that this organization has developed a healthy standard of political and financial transparency. As the report suggests, the relative autonomy of DASEP within IECA is also an important feature of DASEPs' ability to attract external resources and to implement effective programs.



Internal evaluation meeting by DASEP staff in Bunjei.

The broader question facing IECA/ DASEP is how their social programs should fit into the national programs of the Angolan government. Angola's mineral wealth is yielding huge revenues but hardly benefiting most people. The reservations by both sides about each other have hindered full utilization of their respective resources. Friends of Angola will need to avoid lagging too far behind the resolution - by Angolans - of this tension.

*Dr. Bill Burgess teaches geography at Kwantlen University College in Surrey, BC and researches how income inequality affects population health. Dr. Ken Burgess, family doctor, is lead physician of the Hamilton Primary Care Health Team in Hamilton, Ontario. Dr. George Burgess a former Angolan medical missionary, retired from medical practice at 80, is active in church, community and the Rotary Club in Chesley, ON. **Dr. George Burgess and Dr. Ken Burgess gave a Power Point presentation on***

their Spring 2007 Angolan tour to the AMSF June 2007 AGM.

A recent study by Nathan Nunn reports a strong negative correlation between the economic performance of African countries and the number of slaves extracted from that country. It reports that the country today that was the single largest source of slaves was Angola, by a large margin - 3.6 million, compared to 2.0 million from Nigeria, 1.6 from Ghana and 1.4 from Ethiopia. See Nathan Nunn, "The Long Effects of Africa's Slave Trades", NBER Paper No. 13367, Cambridge Mass, Sept 2007. Submitted through Bill Burgess.

Project: Construction of a School in Namibe, Angola by *Bob Malcolm*

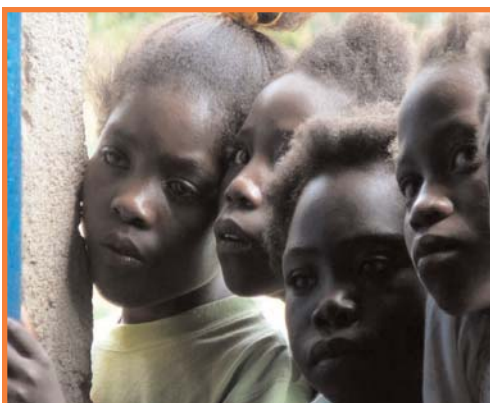
Location: Namibe is a small city in south-west Angola on the coast of the Atlantic Ocean. It is approximately 300 Kms north of the Angola - Namibia border.

The Evangelical Church of Angola, with headquarters in the capital city of Luanda, wants to have a school in their Center in Namibe which will benefit 105 school age children.

The general objective is to make a contribution for National development following years of war and destruction. The 3 specific objectives are: (1) To see the benefit of Education for children (2) To see the Community influenced by the Gospel (3) To see a happy Community that cares about its school and looks after each other.

The dimensions of the building are 8 meters long by 5 meters wide. It will accommodate 35 students in a 3 fold rotation, making its total daily capacity 105 children. There will also be a common washroom divided into 2 sections: one for the girls and one for the boys. The estimated cost is US\$12,000.00.

The local Church in Namibe sends their grateful thanks to the supporters of the Angola Memorial Scholarship Fund (AMSF).



AMSF has granted \$10,000 for leadership development of students at the newly founded Kachiungu Seminary. The IECA seminary planning group has asked for and received permission to use these funds for purchase of a nearby plot of land. This land would be used by the students-in-residence, and their families, to grow food for daily meals. A seminary garden would reduce student costs and over the medium term could generate income for the seminary operating costs, thus supporting sustainability.

Left: Girls watch at the door of an overflow Easter service, Kachiungu, 2007. Church membership in Angola is growing rapidly, with the consequent need for increased pastoral training.

AMSF has granted \$12,000US to build the school in Namibe. AMSF has granted \$30,000US for the IECA/DASEP Formation School work. It has granted \$20,000 to CICA for higher education scholarships. AMSF has granted \$10,000 to IECA for sustainable development of their pastoral leadership training center in Kachiungu. It has reserved \$10,000 in matching funds, towards finishing the roof on the Dondi Institute.

AMSF has recently received donations in honour of Mr. Fred Brancel, Dr. Betty Bridgman, Dr. George Burgess and Dr. Allen & Mrs. Eleanor Knight to mark their birthdays.

AMSF has also received donations in memory of Dr. & Mrs. Alexander Kemp, Dr. Garth Legge, Mr. Jack Pearson, Ms. Edith Radley, Mr. Lance Ward and Mr. Kenneth Welch.

Donors, your prayers and donations to the AMSF-sponsored education work in Angola are so very appreciated.

IMPORTANT INFORMATION RE DONATIONS! Cheques to be made out to **Angola Memorial Scholarship Fund** or **AMSF**. Donations may be sent to your **AMSF Regional Representative**. If you do not have a regional representative, donations may be sent to the **new AMSF Treasurer Eleanor Ellins, 2016-1333 Bloor St., Mississauga, ON L4Y 3T6**. Donations may also be made on line at www.angolamsf.org with Paypal.

Board of Directors: André daCosta, Mary Dewar, David Harl, Ed Lemaster, Glenn Malcolm, Barbara Rogers, Etta Snow.
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