



# THE ANGOLA MEMORIAL SCHOLARSHIP FUND

*(formerly Gilchrist Memorial Angola Student Trust Fund)*

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## SUMMER 2004

Dear Friends of AMSF

For the information in this newsletter I am indebted to "Africa Infoserve" <Infoserve@africafiles.org >, which has a wealth of information on happenings in Africa, also to Dr. Malcolm McVeigh and Rev. Etta Snow. I will begin with the latest news to arrive from IECA, a press release, tr. by Andre Cangovi, which reports on Women's Participation and Development. Seventy six women from different provinces of Angola met in Benguela for a workshop at the end of May 2004. I quote from the press release: "Women have noted that participation is a right. They regarded HIV/AIDS as one of the main contemporary challenges to women because of its impact on society, mostly on women and children. The presence of the Dille family in the workshop was seen as a celebration of our common heritage from God. "Mrs. Ilda Aguas from the Ministry of Family and Women Promotion presented a paper on Challenges of Women in the rural areas". "Dr. Mendes, Angolan Ministry of Health in the Province of Benguela, spoke about HIV/AIDS. Rev. Augusto Chipesse, newly elected General Secretary of IECA, presented a speech on the Role of Women in the Process of Peace Building and National Reconciliation. Rev. Jose Belo Chipenda delivered a speech on Women in the Contemporary Society. Mrs. Eva Chipenda spoke on Women and Knowledge." The news of this workshop gives insight into the way challenge is being met following the long war and resulting devastation.

In many parts of the world there is preparation for the International Day of the Child (June 15<sup>th</sup>). The theme of the All Africa Conference in Nairobi is "Making Africa fit for children." To mention one terrible statistic: some 12 million African children are HIV/AIDS orphans. A particular statistic from Angola (news received by Etta Snow from the Minister of Welfare and Social Reintegration) says: By 2005, 100,000 children in Angola will be infected with HIV/AIDS.

From Malcolm McVeigh comes the news of the visit of a Methodist group to Angola in September and October of last year. The group had a marvellous experience, seeing the church at work, demonstrating great faith and joy, but they confirmed also that the needs are enormous.

First project: brochure in English has two titles: "Angolan Mission Project and Department of Working with Children" (known in Luanda as POSOCAS, a social program with children). There are now eight centres, which in addition to primary schools give training in many areas. Grace Kemp Harris, who was born in Angola and last fall made her first return trip there, noted that the Vocational Training Centre at "Alegria needed more tools and supplies. Second project: the training school for women in downtown Luanda. Third project: theological school in Luanda (42 students!) and Fourth project: Malange project in the Keswa Women's Centre. Albertine Ware Lambert has given Malcolm a full account of the interaction between Visiting Team women and Angolan women. The women (some of whom have to walk many miles to meetings), meet for

worship, Bible study, and domestic science classes. They are amazingly resourceful and hard working. Thank you, Malcolm. I hope AMSF may some day be able to share in these projects.

The United Church of Christ reports that there is to be a conference in Chicago, June 7-10, 2004, organized by Global Ministries and entitled "Reconstruction of Angola: Church and Partner Response" five delegates will be coming from Angola. We look forward to hearing about this conference, which will be over by the time you receive the newsletter.

I have learned that Angola is among the countries that were signatories to the African Children's Charter in November 1999. Efforts are being made to diminish the terrible toll on children's lives but it seems a slow process. AMSF wishes to participate in these efforts wherever possible. Many children still remain on the street in Luanda, eking out a miserable existence. Many are victims of Malaria or HIV/AIDS.

Churches are urged to join the fight against HIV/AIDS. The (Beads of Hope) campaign of the United Church of Canada has made a donation of \$25,000 to the seminary (in Huambo).

Speaking of bright candles in the darkness, I read with delight a report of the visit of Etta Snow and Marion Pardy to Angola in March of this year. They were warmly welcomed everywhere. I quote: "For Marion, it was the fulfilment of a life long dream to connect with the stories she had read about and heard about from the missionaries themselves since her childhood. For Etta, 'returning after a 29 year absence to some of the mission stations where she had worked for 21 years from 1952-1975 was a truly emotional homecoming.' The aftermath of the war has devastated the lives of millions of people, leaving them without even the basic necessities of life. The church in Angola is struggling to meet tremendous challenges. Thousands of Angolans cannot even return to their agricultural roots (where they could help themselves) because of the proliferation of land mines in rural areas and also because in many cases their former properties have been occupied by others."

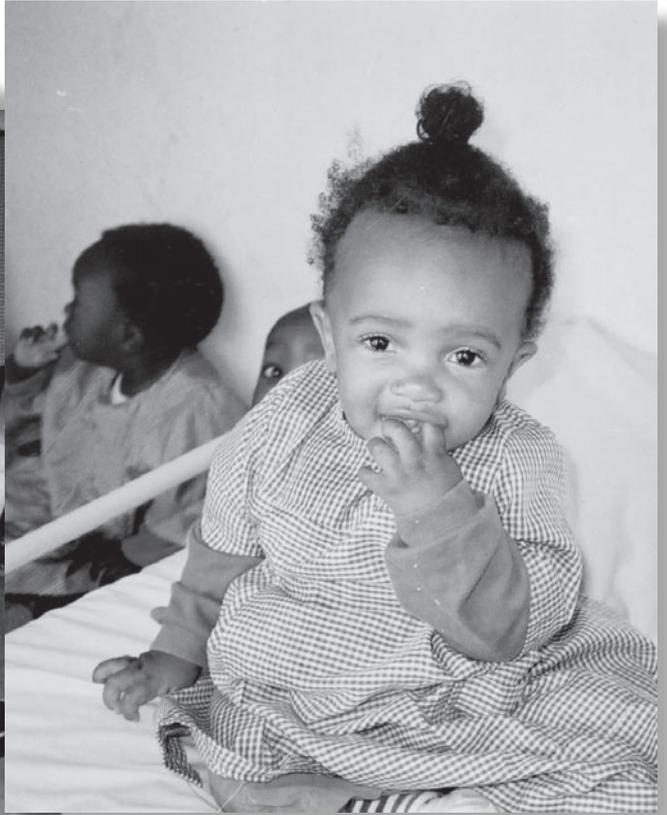
Etta reports that visiting the Dondi Mission after 29 years was "a heart wrenching experience" because there so much destruction. She says that the leprosarium continued to function because the Army, who claimed the Dondi Currie Institute for their quarters, didn't go near the leprosarium for fear contracting leprosy. On a happy note, the primary school is being re-established with over 300 girls and boys. They study in makeshift classrooms with no proper desks or school books. And some classrooms are without a roof. The teachers have not been paid for the last 4 months. Now that's DEDICATION! The current Minister of Health is a graduate of our Means School and received her higher education with the support of AMSF.

Etta gave an interview, which was broadcast to many parts of Angola, and also preached (in Umbundu!) at the worship service at Dondi. She writes: "just in case you have visions of a small country service, over 800 people attended worship, some walking over 25 kilometres, just because we were there from Canada!"

"Visiting churches in Luanda, in Huambo (were the seminary is now located), Kuito (Silva Porto), and the mission stations of Dondi, Bailundo and Chissamba were uplifting experiences. There were opportunities to meet church leaders, teachers, pastors, women leaders, and nurses. Formation Centres have been established for the women where there are courses in Health Education, Human Rights, and Home/Family Care as well as basic courses in reading, writing, knitting, sewing, and cooking.

Etta and Marion had the privilege, before leaving Angola, of meeting with 13 pastors in the Luanda area. They heard that over two million children have no school to attend, that a whole generation of youth, especially from rural areas, have no education or Christian orientation, that HIV/AIDS is on the increase that thousands of refugees and displaced people are solely dependent on humanitarian aid for day to day survival. However, the people see this era of peace as the beginning of a new and challenging era, filled with great possibilities for peace with justice.

Pictures help tell the story. Here are some that Etta brought home.



*At Day Care, Kuito (Silva Porto)*





*Etta and Diolinda (Nurse)  
with children at  
Leprosarium Camp, Dondi*



*Choir: Welcome to Dondi*



*Eva Chipenda, Etta Snow and  
Marion Pardy with children at  
Lobito.*



*Leprosarium Camp, Dondi*

