

HELPING THE PEOPLE OF ANGOLA SINCE 1971

# ANGOLA MEMORIAL SCHOLARSHIP FUND



## AMSF Newsletter

### Excerpts from “Angola – A Time of Change”, The Keynote Address by Luis Samacumbi at the Annual AMSF Banquet, Toronto, June 7, 2008

*Luis Samacumbi heads the Department of Social Assistance, Studies and Projects of Angola's Evangelical Congregational Church.*



*Luis Samacumbi and brother Amaral Samacumbi. Photo - Christianaid.org.uk*

There are times when, after a long day in the hot Angolan sun, I think that there is nothing changing, nothing improving under that sun. Coming home after a trip to the provinces, I find no water, no light. The Internet is down again, impeding my search for information and my reporting to you. I watch Angola's economy grow but know that only a few are reaping the rewards. Over 70% of the people live in absolute poverty. I see how people have been so beaten by the colonial experience and the 27 years of civil war that they are passive, fearful and afraid to hope.

There are other times that I am captured by the Corinthians' image of new creation [II Corinthians 5:17] and I see that old spirit of fear is ushering in a new time of hope. Women get water from wells dug through my Department in Benguela Province. I know that these communities now have safe water. I see the roof on the Dondi Mission Station Institute that will shelter more than 500 stu-

dents as they study to build a better Angola. My Department's Rural Development Project provides families with a team of oxen. They can rent out the team to create revenue that allows them to plant their own crops, feed their families and sell produce to the markets. I hear children greeting their teachers and friends. They run around with the school bags full of books and hope.

I would like to share with you my thoughts in two areas that are crucial to maintaining hope and creating change in Angola – the need for a Holistic Mission perspective and the need to focus on Education. In its strategic plan, my church commits itself to the full expression of God's Good News that all of life is to be redeemed through Spiritual Mission that addresses people's hunger for meaning and reassurance that God's strength will increase their own, and Social Mission, dedicated to minimizing people's suffering, satisfying material needs, involving local communities in decision-making, and creating protection and opportunity, especially for women and children. *(continued on page 2)*

## Why we support AMSF

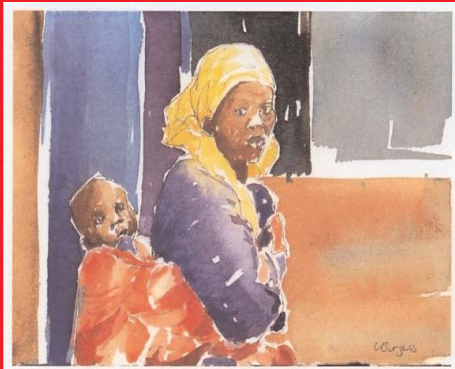
**Long time AMSF members, Ed and Virginia LeMaster, were Methodist missionaries in Angola for close to 10 years. Their daughter, Cathy Collins, a recent AMSF member, spent her early childhood in Angola. Ed has served as president of the board of AMSF and is presently a director.**

**Ed and Virginia:** We are among those who enjoyed living and serving the Angola people, who have established a special place in our hearts and lives. Much of the general and theological education, as well as the medical work, was greatly interrupted with the outbreak of war in 1961. The people had come to appreciate the value of schools, leadership in the life of the church and the health programs. They are hungry for all these benefits. AMSF is committed to helping in these areas, and we, as former missionaries, are committed to helping through the AMSF.

**Cathy Collins:** Although young when I left Angola, it will always be strong in my heart. I cherish the fellowship of missionaries from our mission of Quessua and a number of African friends. Support of AMSF allows me to give back, to help through the provision of scholarships. These are especially needed in post war Angola: by children preparing for the future as leaders in the church and country, by young mothers needing to learn how to better care for their families.



*LeMaster family gathering. In the centre, Ed and Virginia are holding great grandson Tyler. To the far right is Cathy, Tyler's grandmother.*



Angolan Mother and Child - Watercolour by Lillian Burgess

## Artwork in the Service of AMSF by Lillian Burgess

I am a Regional Representative for AMSF and really believe in this organization. I give it my support by donating my organizational time but wanted to make a greater financial contribution. As a self-employed artist I produce one-of-a-kind art cards. I decided, as my personal fundraising project, to paint a series of water-colour images which could be printed and sold as cards. So far there are six depictions of people and places in Angola.

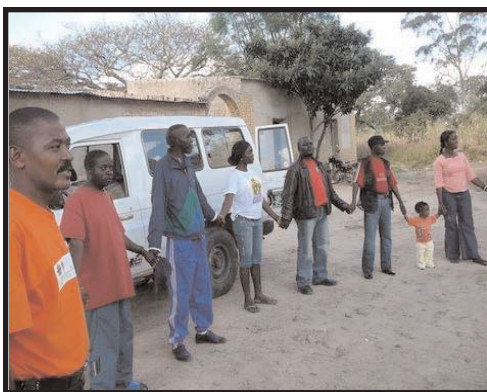
My AMSF series also includes a print of an oil painting of D. Flora, a midwife whose portrait was painted by Margaret Dawson, a Canadian missionary in Angola. Also available is a poignant image of a poinsettia blooming in one of the mission station buildings ruined by war, printed from a photograph taken and donated by Sue Short. People who buy these cards can feel good about knowing that all the profits go directly to AMSF. The attractive images remind those who receive them of the place and people to whom the AMSF is committed. For more information contact [skyhill@bmts.com](mailto:skyhill@bmts.com).

### “Angola - A Time of Change” - Continued from Page 1

My own church is struggling with making the link between the two areas. The challenge is to sustain its own social outreach arm, the Department of Social Assistance, Studies and Projects, which I head. It is only through the support of people like you in AMSF that our social projects in health, education and community development survive and succeed. So many church leaders only see what happens within the four walls of the church, instead of what is happening outside in the lives of their members, in the surrounding community and in their nation and the world. At moments like this, I think of you, our friends and partners, and know that we do not stand alone. Some of you have stood with us shoulder to shoulder for decades now. You have lived well beyond the four walls of your churches and demonstrated by your actions the connection between the spiritual and social dimensions of our faith.



Rural Development Project Team Meeting, Bunjei.

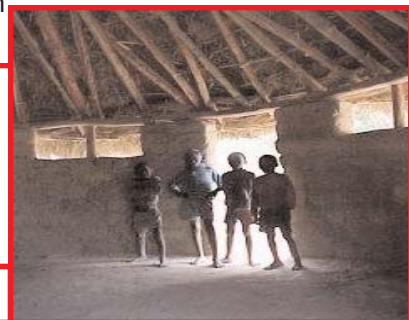


Closing Circle - Rural Development Project Evaluation, Bunjei. Luis Samacumbi far left.

We can only have lasting social and spiritual transformation in Angola if we invest in education. As the eye allows light to come into the body, the mind allows light to stimulate our souls. We continue to recover from the bitter legacy of the colonial mindset toward education which focused on passively accepting information and of not freeing students to participate in open inquiry and intellectual growth. Lack of education was a method of control. Good education is the beginning of change. We need to equip our children well to be agents of positive change. For this to happen, we need to engage the participation of parents in the process of teaching and learning, ensure that schools will be open to the communities in which they reside, and ensure that teachers use methods that actively engage students in their acquisition of knowledge.

It is indeed a time of change in Angola – and what that change looks like depends on us who are on the ground in Angola and on the international community that has a presence there. We must rise to the occasion and claim positive change, participation and empowerment for the poor, the marginalized, and those without health care, education and a means to make a decent living. I pray that you will continue to journey with me, with the people of Angola, in the spirit of new creation!

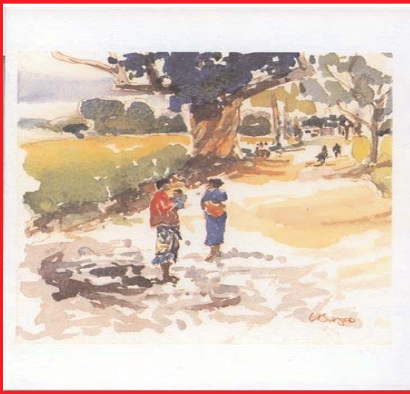
This past year AMSF granted \$12,000.00 for the building of an elementary school by the Baptist church in Namibe, southern Angola. Members of this church have recently written to AMSF member, Bob Malcolm, to say "there is light at the other end of the tunnel" in their efforts to obtain authorization to build their school.



Right: Children in Village Meeting House

This past year AMSF made the following grants to the Evangelical Congregational Church of Angola: \$10,000 to complete the Dondi Institute roof; \$10,000 for leadership training at the Kachilengue Seminary; and \$30,000, as usual, for the Formation School work. This coming year the AMSF grant for the Formation School work will be increased to \$40,000 in support of its expansion and success.

## Evangelical Congregational Church of Angola Expands its Formation School Work With AMSF Support



*Bailundu Afternoon - Watercolour by Lillian Burgess*

The dozen or so Formation Schools of the Evangelical Congregational Church of Angola (IECA), scattered throughout the country, are offering 3 to 6 month courses. (These range from accounting to business administration, computer training, English, human rights education and marriage preparation.) During training, students are supported in selling any products they make. They are also supported in the development of a business plan, and the search for financial backing and potential business partnerships. Some student loans are available to them.

IECA has recently reestablished 6 Vocational Schools, on former mission stations, under the supervision of the Formation Schools described above. These schools offer a more basic vocational education to young people to prepare them for advanced vocational training and homemaking. (Courses include cooking and pastry-making, decorating, care of clothing /laundry, health education, knitting sewing, embroidery, nutrition and home administration.) Students in some Vocational Schools do agricultural field work; the crops supplement their diet and surpluses are sold for school sup-

plies. One school grew 300K of corn, 60K of soya beans and 30K of peanuts. That significant production is encouraging in light of growing global food security concerns.

Some training centres are able to pay their teachers. Other centres are staffed by teacher volunteers who teach half a day and work elsewhere to support themselves. These teachers could be employed professionally by other agencies. IECA recognizes that it is vital to find more funds for teacher salaries, to retain their dedicated staff. Some centres suffer a scarcity of materials such as kitchen utensils, sewing machines, cloth, embroidery and sewing thread.

Rev. Lucia Chitula, of IECA, emphasizes that the Formation Schools support women's self-sufficiency and the ability to contribute to society and church; they are central to the work of the Women's Society of IECA. She expresses gratitude for many blessings, to God and to AMSF donors. Luis Samacumbi reports that "in spite of hardships and delays in executing the work that needs to be accomplished we are able to say the end result of our work is positive. Many women's lives have been changed because of the help received from AMSF. And especially the youth who are preparing themselves for life's challenges. IECA sincerely thanks AMSF for its continual moral, spiritual and financial support".

*Report of vocational training work compiled by Rev. Lucia Chitula, Director General of the Women's Society of IECA and Luis Samacumbi, Director General of the Department of Social and Professional Studies, (DASEP) of IECA. Translation and summary by Rev. Etta Snow.*



*Planning Meeting of IECA Women's Society Leaders - D<sup>a</sup> Namuieca, Rev. Delfina Nachihembe and Rev. Adelaide Tomas Manuel*

This past year AMSF granted \$20,000 for advanced education scholarships to the Council of Christian Churches in Angola (CICA). Scholarships were awarded to 6 secondary school students, 1 student training as a bookkeeper, and 9 university students. The university students were studying medicine, law, urban architecture, international relations and mental health. Rev. Kiaku Avelino of CICA expressed appreciation for the encouragement AMSF gives the training of Angolan youth.



*Angolan Landscape*

# Maintaining a Bridge of Solidarity

by Marilyn McKim, AMSF member



Marilyn McKim, AMSF Secretary

Board member André da Costa is relaxing in my Toronto home. We're sipping apple cider on a warm afternoon after an AMSF meeting. I have a question on my mind. "AMSF is such a small organization. Although we raise \$100,000 annually for education and training in Angola, would our donations be better used if we contributed to larger, well-established organizations that are also active in Angola?" My own answer would be yes, that's possible. And yet we, as AMSF donors, are honouring the legacy of those who transported their ministering, medical and teaching skills to Angola. Their efforts contributed enormously to respecting human rights and championing human dignity. Besides, as an AMSF donor, I can be sure that my contributions are being used specifically for education, which I consider to be the foundation of a healthy society.



Andre daCosta, AMSF Director

What would André's answer be? His perspective would be rooted in his Angolan past. "When the first missionaries arrived in the provinces of Luanda and Quanza Norte in 1885, my grandfather was 5 years old. The missionaries had no support from abroad and they lived off farming. Many of them died of malaria and other tropical diseases. They never gave up. I, the fourth generation from that vision to save lives for Christ, also have the vision that my contribution, however small in nature or value, will be blessed and Jesus will use our 'loaves and fishes' to perform his miracles among our people in Angola." André asked me to imagine what it would be like to be an Angolan student who receives financial assistance for my studies. "That student" he said, "would exclaim 'Wow! Someone in North America cares for me'." He explained, "Financial aid motivates students. We are creating opportunity with our donations. That is the most important thing. And be assured, the students know the history behind the donations. They know about the missionaries who, like Dr. Sid and Frankie Gilchrist, left the comforts of home and family behind to serve Christ in Angola." Days later, back home in North Carolina, André affirmed his thoughts by email. "The Angolan people have suffered plenty. We must maintain the Christian bridge built between North America and Angola. Christians on the other side look at us as brothers, sisters, friends, supporters. This bridge of Christian love is the vital bridge that connects us."

AMSF has recently received donations in honour of Ruth Balleny, Fred Brancel, Grace Harris, Eric Jennett, Rev. Bessie Lane, Mary MacDougall, Kay Pearson, Nancy and Bill Tolley for their work, Frances Walbridge for her 97th birthday, David & Maribel Rozendal for their 50th Wedding Anniversary.

AMSF has also received donations in memory of Phyllis Burgess, Dr. Jean Collins, Ellen Cameron, Bryant Dunshee, Janice Green Garland, Dr. Sidney Gilchrist, Innis & Murray MacInnis, The MacLeod Family, Jack Pearson, Edith Radley, Martha Schofield, Rev. Arthur Steed, Lillian Steed, William Tolley, Lance & Catherine Ward, 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 **AMSF Treasurer Eleanor Ellins, 2016-1333 Bloor St., Mississauga, ON L4Y 3T6**. Donations may also be made on line at [www.angolamsf.org](http://www.angolamsf.org).

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