



HE KNOCKS

FRED & ELSIE SCAIFE NEWSLETTER

*And whoso shall receive one such little child
in my name receiveth me. Matt. 18:5*



Vol 3 Issue 1

BUNIA CHILDREN'S HOPE CENTER

Spring 2007

OUR BCHC VISIT

On March 12, we flew from Minneapolis to Kampala, Uganda with three extra pieces of checked luggage. We were carrying two boxes of medicines from the Medical Assistance Program, a peanut grinder, computer, printer, projector, 35 French math books, and various school supplies. On March 14, Mission Aviation Fellowship (MAF) flew us with baggage to Bunia in a small plane.

The UN presence was quite evident. We passed convoys and manned barricades at the major intersections. We felt safe all eight days of our visit. Indeed, because of the UN presence, the area has been enjoying peace and recovering its infrastructure. Much construction is underway and people seem happy to be at work.

Our first view of the BCHC compound surprised us. There were about 20 students standing at the entrance



Some of 254 orphans that greeted us.

waving palm branches singing "Karibu" which means "welcome". We drove through the entrance and past the first building to an open area between the buildings. There, singing and dancing, were all the other children and staff! We were escorted into the circle of people and welcomed in grand, unbelievable fashion. The children were resplendent in their school uniforms.

cont'd on next page

BCHC NEEDS HELP

Despite all the good things at BCHC, the increase in number of orphans has put a strain on the finances of the organization. The children are being fed twice per week instead of every day. Some children walk up to 10 kilometers to school after not having eaten the previous evening because their host family does not have food. They arrive at school tired and hungry; often they report to the nurse saying they are sick.

We are asking our readers for help. The situation is urgent and we have taken some emergency steps but assistance is needed. Whatever you can afford will be greatly appreciated by the children, staff and us.

Some of the family homes were visited. Many live in mud huts with thatched roofs and dirt floors. The family sleeps on mats if they are available. Many people are living off the land without jobs or at best low-paid jobs. Despite the families' poor circumstances, the African culture is to help children in need. Many of the orphans are living in a loving family situation even though the family is often stretched to meet their basic needs.

In addition to feeding the children, there are several other needs to be addressed: improving nutrition, purifying the compound water, continuing the dental and medical care, setting-up a second nursery class, preparing for a sixth grade to start in August, establishing a library, and determining how best to help the children who walk long distances on footpaths. The need of each child continues for books, school supplies, personal toiletries, and clothing.

Please make checks payable to Christ Presbyterian Church and indicate "Bunia Children's Fund" on the memo line. Then mail to Elsie Scaife, 8500 Franlo Rd. #101, Eden Prairie, MN 55344.

Train a child in the way he should go and when he is old he will not turn from it.

Proverbs 22:6

OUR BCHC VISIT cont'd.

We were able to review all aspects of the operation of the BCHC and were very impressed with what God has done. The teachers are experienced and very good. The compound is spacious and well cared for. The security fence is in place and the watchmen take good care of everything. The new classrooms are completed and being used. Water and electricity work well and need to be extended. The nurse is experienced and well liked by the children. We were able to see her gently treating some of the small children.



Nurse Banura

Large gardens have been planted with sweet potatoes, cassava, carrots and onions. Other gardens are being cultivated for planting.



Sweet Potato Garden

Bisoke and Furaha have an excellent standing and respect within the community. They are well organized and able to keep the operations running smoothly. The atmosphere is a happy one, filled with praise to God. Morale is high among the students and staff. Bisoke and Furaha are very transparent about what goes on to make BCHC function.

The compound is being developed very well. The buildings form a rectangle around a large open area that is used for many activities. There is area for play behind the buildings as well as an area used for a large garden. And there is space for more structures as the building program continues.



Compound showing original building on left, chapel and new building on right. Newly constructed kitchen completes the rectangular shape.

REV. BISOKE PEACE & RECONCILIATION

Three weeks before our arrival in Bunia, the Anglican Church ordained Bisoke as a minister. The record of his courses at Daystar University and his past experience qualified him for ordination. The Bible and the Peace & Reconciliation courses that had been taken particularly impressed the review board. Bisoke and Furaha will remain responsible for the Bunia Children's Hope Center. His ability to work with other ministers will be improved and his field of contacts widened.



Rev. Bisoke

As you may remember, Bisoke and Furaha were officially commissioned by the Anglican Church of Congo, in the Boga Diocese to minister to the orphans in the Bunia area. However, the Anglican church could not support them financially because it has been torn up by war and is in the process of rebuilding its infrastructure. The church provides volunteers and prayer support. The Church has provided land that BCHC is using for large gardens. Two doctors and one nurse help the BCHC nurse when she needs assistance. Bishop Henri Iningoma follows the events and actions of BCHC and is very interested in the BCHC model of caring for orphans.

One of the most significant aspects of our visit was the realization that Bisoke and Furaha are making a major contribution to peace and reconciliation in the area. BCHC has accepted orphans from the two major tribes of the conflict and are teaching them to love and forgive one another rather than have a heart of revenge. Students are being taught to work together and to respect one another. In the picture below you can see how, with arms around shoulders, the whole row of students can sway from side to side. And they certainly enjoy it!



"Love One Another"

THE PEANUT GRINDER SURPRISE

We took a peanut grinder made by Compatible Technologies of St. Paul, MN to BCHC. Although we could see the advantage of the grinder we were not sure how the cooks (often set in their ways) would receive it. Peanut butter is a nutritious staple for American children. Bisoke has said frequently that what is good for American children is good for Congolese children.



Picking peanuts, removing unwanted rocks

When we arrived, the box with the grinder was the one missing piece of luggage. Five days passed before it arrived and cleared customs. We had planned to demonstrate the grinder by taking it apart, cleaning it and putting it back together two or three times before actually using it. We were apprehensive when the cooks said they were preparing to use the peanuts for the meal that day. However, it turned out that the cooks had more experience than we had on the preparation of the peanuts and ways of serving them. Our thinking had not gone beyond peanut butter.



Roasting peanuts

As we lifted the grinder out of the box, Fred instructed that it was necessary for the grinder to be attached firmly to a sturdy base. Bisoke quickly called for four older boys to come hold the grinder steady. We had asked for a small amount of peanuts to demonstrate the grinding process. To our surprise the cooks brought in a large tray of peanuts that had already been washed, dried and roasted. A group of women quickly gathered to rub handfuls of peanuts to remove the skins. The peanuts were then winnowed to blow off the loose skins.



Holding grinder while grinding

First the cooks took a turn at cranking the grinder, then the boys started taking turns. Everyone eventually had a turn at cranking. The first ground peanuts were flaky and

mushy but not peanut butter. We realized the peanuts needed more roasting. After more roasting, the grinder started producing very good peanut butter. Our thinking was to serve the peanut butter or some kind of bread or cracker but the cooks had other plans. They had huge tubs of cooked sweet potatoes ready to serve with a peanut sauce.



Peanut butter !!!

A pot of oil was heated and a plate of onions was added. Meanwhile, our peanut butter was mixed with water to sauce consistency. This was in turn mixed into the oil and onions. A delicious peanut sauce was ready to be served over the sweet potatoes.

The sweet potatoes and peanut sauce were carried in turn to each classroom. After thanking God for the food, the cooks put two sweet potatoes and one ladle of sauce on a plate for each student. In the nursery, the teacher and her helper cut each child's potatoes into small bites.



Cooks serving sweet potatoes and peanut sauce

The cooks were delighted with the grinder. It provided a substantial savings of time and energy. It was a more sanitary process than grinding the peanuts between two rocks to make peanut butter.



Serving small children

ELSIE'S CORNER

One of my early memories of Sunday School was having missionaries talk about the need for teaching African children and adults about Jesus. I had the urge to be one of those missionaries, but practical considerations sidetracked me.

In 1998, Fred was called to Daystar University in Nairobi, Kenya to help Daystar become "computer literate", as Dr. Stephen Talitwala expressed the need. When we arrived at Daystar, Balikenga and Furaha Bisoke were in my "English as a Second Language" class. I had a flashback of my early childhood Sunday School days with the stories of African children and missionaries. As I got to know Bisoke and Furaha I learned of their calling to return home to Bunia, DRC, to establish an orphanage for the many children left alone because of war, tribal conflicts, and HIV/AIDS. In 2004 they graduated and returned to the DRC to answer God's calling, while we returned to the US.

Fred and I talked to friends about this incredible couple who were commissioned by the Anglican Church to go into the town and countryside to gather up orphans who were living alone. The Bisokes quickly gathered 57 children who seemed doomed to a life of hunger and crime. They started a school in a one-room house with only benches on which the children could sit. My church Circle and some close friends were the first to respond with cash contributions to BCHC.

As we tried to get help from big organizations such as World Vision, World Help and others, inevitably the question was "Have you been to see this orphanage?" Our answer was "No, not yet. But we have confidence in this couple and we believe it is a good organization." It became evident that Fred and I had the most knowledge about Bisoke, Furaha, and the BCHC and, therefore, were the logical ones to visit and evaluate the organization.

All sorts of roadblocks came up. There was a long nine-month period of unrest in the Congo due to the election of a new president. But little by little a travel plan emerged. Calm settled over Bunia by Nov. 2006. We realized more and more that we needed to see the orphanage, compound, buildings, school teachers and the community. I continued to pray for God's will and peace in our hearts. My heart became peaceful. I could go, but Fred saw many obstacles. One doctor told Fred not to go because he had so many small health issues. I became resigned to our not going and stopped planning for the trip. In January, Fred had an exam with his cardiologist and to our amazement, the doctor said, "Your heart is fine. I don't see any reason for you not to go to Africa." We were astonished. So our thinking turned back to "Quick, we have got to get visas and go!"

When we landed in Bunia, my life had come full circle. I was experiencing a joyful time in the Congo taking Jesus' love to the children but many of them already knew Him. I learned more than I ever taught. Instead of teaching Africans, I am learning from them what it means to trust God for everything, what it means to forgive, and what it means to share.

FRED'S CORNER

Sometimes I find it difficult to know how an activity affects me and even more difficult to find the words to describe how I feel. Such is my experience with visiting BCHC. I was so impressed by the atmosphere of good Christian men and women at work caring for the orphans. It is quite evident that God is at work in the BCHC. While I was there, aches and pains of age receded, short-term memory issues were less, and energy and strength seemed to come when I needed them.



Nursery class

What a glorious experience! Most of what we had planned and the contributions from you readers had been implemented or used. It is also evident that BCHC would not exist if it were not for contributions. So God is at work in more places than just Bunia to enable the orphans to be cared for.

An example of the dedicated workers at BCBC is the Nursery class teacher. I just didn't believe it! BCHC has more than 60 children between the ages of 3 and 5 in one classroom! How could any teacher handle them? Elsie and I entered the classroom while in session. The teacher had control and the attention of all the children. Her excellent skills and techniques were evident from the very beginning. She has one helper with bathroom duty as the main function. **AND THE TEACHER HAD HER OWN 12-POUND BABY STRAPPED ON HER BACK!**



It is of course much better to have smaller classes, so a second nursery class is planned to be in operation soon.



"FULL CIRCLE"

For comments, you may Phone #952-826-6474 or email us: earscaife@aol.com or FHScscaife@aol.com