

Zambia Newsletter

Zambia Missions

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Thomas Simubali and I returned home to Zambia May 15 from our short trip to the USA in April. We visited a number of congregations and key supporters in the work (e.g. Elders of our sponsoring church in Memphis).

I want to devote this rest of this newsletter to our orphan-care ministry called, "Kerin's Kids." The following is written by our daughter Kerin.

Kerin's Kids: Ryan.

It took about 45 minutes to reach our destination. The road was dusty, bumpy, and the vehicle didn't have air conditioning so we had to open the windows to stay cool and as a result all the dust came pouring into the car. Finally, we arrived. I got out the car and dusted myself off.

There were at least 30 children running around. I found out that some of these kids had walked as far as 10 miles to come and see us even though I had come to see just one. I went and said hello to everyone there, not knowing who he was or what he looked like. Then someone pointed him out to me. I was shocked. I knew a little about his condition but I wasn't ready for what I saw.

His name is Ryan and he is the most adorable little boy I have ever seen. I knew that he had been born blind but I didn't know that he couldn't walk or talk. Ryan is 3 years old but he is the size of an 18 month old. I went over to his mom and, after greeting her, I asked if I could hold him. I took him back to where I was sitting under a tree. I asked the mom about the baby and his home life; she said that his father left them when he was born because he thought the mother had done something to Ryan to make him the way he was. Thus, the mother was left alone with Ryan and her other children. The mother cannot get a job because of Ryan's condition (as she can't leave him). The grandmother used to take care of him but she passed away a few months ago; so now there is no one to help her.

The mother also explained that she had taken Ryan to the eye clinic and that they had told her that they could give him some medicine that "might" help (but it might not), but it would cost her K750,000 (about \$145.00). There is, of course, no way she can afford such expensive medicine (which might not even help). It is estimated that about 65% of Zambians live on less than \$1 per day! I also think Ryan may have some

type of mental disability. Certain things he does give me reason to suspect he does.

After this first visit I returned a second time to talk to Ryan's mother. She told me that her husband lives an hour away and doesn't visit them because he doesn't "accept" Ryan the way he is (i.e., does not accept that he is his son). He does give some money when the other children are sick and pays for the other children's school fees; but he will not give any money to Ryan. She, then, shared with me about how sad she feels for her son (that his father doesn't want him) and how scared she is for Ryan if he gets sick. Ryan's mother doesn't have a job because there is no one to care for Ryan when she is away. I took Ryan and his mother to a doctor. friend of mine who told me that I need to take Ryan to the mental hospital so that they can properly assess his condition.



Perhaps there are some of you who would like to help Ryan.

Ryan first needs to go to the doctor so his needs can be better defined. Most likely his medical needs will require extensive care. He is very malnourished and he needs some therapy to help him learn to walk and talk. To provide this assistance, Ryan will need to stay in our baby house for the next two years.

The cost of our "in-house" care is about \$125 per month (not including the baby formula). This may seem higher than some of the other orphan-care sponsorship programs which mostly provide only partial assistance or house large numbers of older children who can be feed in mass for less money. Kerin's Kids also provides partial care to orphans (e.g. formula), but all of the children admitted into the baby house are infants, most of whom have special needs. This care requires a larger staff ratio and must provide much more medical care. Baby formula is quite expensive in Zambia (\$50 per month) as it is imported from South Africa. Thus, total cost for an infant like Ryan in our baby house, including the formula, is about \$175.

However, in Ryan's case we do not yet know how much the extra medical costs are going to be. He will need special training in order to learn to walk and talk. In addition, there is a school for the deaf and blind in Lusaka. We will do what we can with what money we have to help Ryan. You can only imagine what the future for Ryan is, if he doesn't get some help. Such kids as Ryan often end up being neglected (and die) or grow up to be a total invalid as an adult (unable to care for themselves and totally dependent upon their mother for everything).

These are the children that we are trying to help: children who are orphaned and abandoned or are in need of serious medical assistance like Ryan. If you, your family, church, small group or Bible class would like to sponsor Ryan (or provide some of this assistance), then you can do so by sending your donation to "Zambia Missions" (1910 Sycamore View Rd, Memphis, TN 38134) and be sure to write on the memo line: "Sponsor Ryan."

Kerin's Kids: Millimo.

There is baby girl, Millimo, who I have heard about that might need to come to "Kerin's Kids." She is a single orphan (i.e., one parent dead). Her mother committed suicide and her father didn't do anything to provide for Millimo after the mother passed (i.e, basically abandoned). Her father got remarried. Now that he is remarried he wants nothing to do with his baby girl. The aunt to Millimo took the her, but the aunt already has 5 children of her own. Her husband's only job is making and selling charcoal which gives him a maximum of K400,000 per month. (\$80.00). The uncle to Millimo said he doesn't accept her and won't pay for her (which is very common in Zambia for men not to accept responsibility for babies fathered by another family member). There is nothing the women can do about it if the father or the father's family refuse to acknowledge a child as theirs (even if it is their wife). Court fees are way too expensive and the courts favor the men anyway. I have not yet gone to visit the Aunt to see what she might be willing to do for the girl. Millimo is not yet one year old and will need formula (since the mother is dead) regardless of whether or not she comes in to our baby house.

The cost per child staying in our baby house is \$125, plus \$50 for a baby needing formula. Not all of the children we are assisting stay in our baby house. In fact, most of the children we are assisting are staying with their relatives (which is our preference). Our goal is to try to provide what minimal assistance we can to help empower families to keep the children in their homes. We bring into our baby house only those children whose families are unwilling or unable to keep them. And, even then, we continue to work with the extended family to eventually take the child back into their homes. Those babies that come into our house only stay for 2 years. After the 2 years, they either return back to their families or turned over to another missionary orphan-care program in Zambia.

We also provide baby formula to mothers with HIV-AIDS so that they do not pass on the virus to their children through nursing. The cost of providing formula to HIV-AIDS mothers or families keeping orphaned babies in their homes is \$50 per month (includes cost of fuel to deliver the formula). It is our hope that one day we will develop a way to produce baby

formula from soybeans. In fact, this next year Thomas Simubali is going to start getting the farmers we have trained to start growing soybeans as a cash crop. We just need to find a cheap way to make baby formula from some of this soybean crop. If you would like to help sponsor a child like Ryan or Millimo in our baby house (\$125 per month); or if you would like to help provide baby formula to orphaned children or children of HIV-AID's mothers (\$50 per month), then please send your donations to "Zambia Missions" (1910 Sycamore View, Memphis, TN 38134) and write what you want to contribute to in the memo line (e.g. "Baby formula" or "Sponsor a child").



GOOD NEWS! The very first Kerin's Kids baby Gideon (above) has finished his 2 years with us and is healthy and fine. I talked to his mother 6 months ago to remind her that when he turned 2 he would no longer be in the program. They came out to my house to see us and get their last formula and food. I am so happy that we have helped and he is happy and healthy!

Dani (below) is also doing well and has 6 months left in the program temporarily back in the house with us while his mother is in the hospital getting treatment for TB.



Joseph (below) is growing big and still has another year and a few months in the program. Thank you all for your donations to help these vulnerable babies and their families!

God bless you!

– Kerin French and KIDS!

