



# Amano Christian School

## Zambia

'I like the swimming!' 'I like playing recorders and singing!' 'I like learning verses!' These are some of the comments made by younger students at Amano Christian School in Zambia.

Zambia is a landlocked country located in central southern Africa. It has a population of just over 11 million and covers an area five times the size of the UK. 40% of Zambians live in urban areas; 1.5 million live in the Copperbelt (the copper mining area).

One in every six adults lives with HIV/AIDS. More teachers die of HIV/AIDS every year than are being trained. In 2002 more than 2,000 teachers died from AIDS-related diseases, but less than 1,000 students graduated as teachers that year. Life expectancy in Zambia fell from 47 in 1992 to 37 in 2002. By 2012 life expectancy is predicted to fall as low as 27.

Due to economic hardship and other problems, government schools are struggling with 46 or more

Hilary Millard went to teach at Sakeji School in a remote area of Zambia in 1986 after teaching in Harrow for four years and studying at All Nations Christian College. In her last year at Sakeji, Hilary was Acting Head. Then, in 2003, she moved to Chingola to help start Amano Christian School. At present she is Primary Headteacher and Acting Secondary Headteacher and teaches Grades 1 and 2 every morning.

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pupils per teacher. Many schools now operate a shift-system. A number of primary schools have three sessions a day to cope with pupil numbers. So, whilst the teachers work long hours, many pupils are being rationed to three hours of schooling per day. The inevitable result is that the potential of most children is never realised. In 2004 the adult literacy rate was 67%.

One of the original areas of ministry for the early missionaries in Zambia was education, which the government later took over. Recently, however, many new private schools have been established. The vision of Amano Christian School was born out of the need to provide a Christian boarding school near the urban centres of the Copperbelt to educate missionaries' children (local and foreign), disadvantaged children (particularly HIV/AIDS orphans) and other children as space is available.

## A new school

In 1999 a farmer living near Chingola decided to sell his farm and retire. After 18 months of prayer and deliberation the Trustees bought the land and began planning the school in earnest.

The 980 acre (400 hectare) parcel of land lies directly off the highway between the main towns of Chingola (12 km) and Kitwe (45 km) and is bordered to the north-west by a perennial stream.



Enjoying a nearby swimming pool

The location of the school offers a wonderful opportunity to teach the students how to live environmentally friendly lives as they learn to look after God's creation in the way God intended us to.

The school aims to offer a high standard of education which will equip children to live according to a biblical worldview. The Trustees plan to provide places for up to 150 primary pupils and 150 secondary pupils, along with some places for A-level students. In the primary department both UK and Zambian education materials are used. The secondary curriculum reflects the international flavour of the school with studies leading to IGCSE qualifications. A-level work is intended to enable Amano students to enter tertiary education in many countries around the world.

In 2005 the students started a banana plantation with 420 plants, which produced suckers and increased the number of plants to 2,230. Staff supervise the senior students as they run the banana plantation – making sure irrigation, pruning and cropping are carried out at the right times, as well as administering the clerical and financial aspects of the project. All of this is incorporated into the IGCSE Business Studies course. The student body and local buyers are enjoying the results of all the hard work!

## Growth

Amano Christian School opened in January 2004, with 13 students on roll. Classes were held at a nearby conference centre for the first two terms while volunteers from Brass Tacks (UK mission-support agency) and the German Liebenzell Mission, worked with Zambian workmen to construct the first multi-purpose building. Later in 2004 a team from the Senior Volunteer Network (SVN) visited and gave invaluable advice. In fact, since work started, more than 80 volunteers have come to Amano to help in different ways. Some worked on the building site, others worked in class and yet others cared for the children out of school hours.

A number of schools in the UK have generously sent books, furniture and other equipment to Amano, and several churches and individuals give ongoing prayerful, financial support.

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Pupils in the school's banana plantation

A global shipping company donated a number of lorry containers. These were cut and welded together, windows and doors were added, insulation was fitted inside, flooring was laid and appropriate roofing was erected. It is now hard to believe these lovely classrooms were once storage containers!

Work continues on creating a hard-surface sports court and building a second dormitory. A kitchen and dining room are also needed. PE is a popular part of the curriculum and we all look forward to the day when we will have our own swimming pool. The Trustees are looking to the Lord to provide the means to build these facilities so they can accommodate some of the many applicants waiting for school places.

In January 2007 Amano had 78 students on roll: 39 primary and 39 secondary. In all, 50 are boarders; 31 of these stay over the weekends because they live too far away to go home. The dorm parents who care for these children often speak about how well they all get on together. The majority of the student body is Zambian, but seven other nationalities are represented as well.

## Opportunity

All the staff are missionaries and do not receive a salary from the school, but are supported by churches and friends in the UK, America, Germany and New Zealand. Amano also encourages financial and prayerful support from the West for Zambian teachers in the hope that more will join the staff on the same basis as their overseas colleagues.



The school's administration building

As I write this article, Amano is still in need of a Secondary Headteacher and has vacancies for trained secondary and primary teachers; staff with experience of catering, building and maintenance; staff able to carry out secretarial duties; those who feel called to give the care needed in the role of dorm parents. All Amano staff have an opportunity to positively influence the lives of young people who will, in turn, shape the future of Zambia and its neighbours.

We believe a lasting change in the quality of life can only be achieved through a personal encounter and relationship with the Lord Jesus. Several primary students showed they had learned a lot about prayer when, during class one morning, they immediately offered to pray for their teacher because she mentioned she wasn't feeling well. Others have been asking leading questions about spiritual matters.

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Evangelism in Zambia has reached a fairly mature stage in urban areas. A growing number of Zambians have taken up the challenge to live in neighbouring poverty-stricken and war-torn countries to bring the message of hope to severely traumatised people. But expatriate missionaries are still needed too, especially in the supportive role of teaching, training and enabling young Zambians to reach out to their own people and neighbours.

Amano Christian School ministers to the children of these workers, both Zambian and expatriate, by providing them with a high standard of education.

### **Wisdom**

The devastation of HIV/AIDS has produced a large number of orphans. It is our Christian duty to lead the way in enabling these children to

overcome their disadvantaged start to life. We would like to provide more bursaries for such children and for Zambian nationals involved in mission work, through the sponsorship scheme. I interviewed one of our sponsored students:

**Hilary:** What was different at Amano from the government school you attended in Lusaka?

**Student:** It took me a while to get used to a small school. There were some new subjects such as Design and Technology, swimming and discussions about the news and current affairs.

**Hilary:** What did and didn't you like about Amano?

**Student:** The classrooms were too small! I liked Art and most of the teaching.

**Hilary:** How has Amano changed?

**Student:** There are more buildings and more students, teachers and volunteers.

**Hilary:** What changes would you still like to see happen?

**Student:** A swimming pool at school.

**Hilary:** Yes, that would be great. It gets so hot here and swimming is an important part of our curriculum. You will leave at the end of this year when you have done your IGCSE exams, what would you like to do?

**Student:** I'd like to become a pilot or a car designer if I could.

The main desire of all of us on the staff is for the students to develop a relationship with the Lord and live their lives guided by His Word. Please pray that the students will make commitments to the Lord while they are here. The word 'Amano' means 'wisdom', so a further prayer request is that all of us involved with the school will know the Lord's wisdom as we work together for His glory.

■ Hilary Millard



Hilary Millard and the first students to attend the school in January 2004