



*Cross International*

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**PROJECT 0231**

# Grace Ministries

## Support for AIDS orphans

— Lusaka, Zambia —



Religion that God our Father accepts as pure and faultless is this: to look after orphans and widows in their distress and to keep oneself from being polluted by the world.

James 1:27

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## Project Synopsis

### Description

Help AIDS orphans and vulnerable children get the nutrition, clothing, health care, and education they need.

### Purpose

Financial assistance enables poor relatives or foster parents to take over the responsibility of raising these desperate children, who would otherwise have nowhere to go.

### Location

The Zambian capital city of Lusaka and nearby villages.

### Cost

**\$33,000** supports 50 orphaned children and their foster families for a whole year. That is **\$132** per person for the average family of five.

### Highlights

- The HIV/AIDS pandemic in Zambia has devastated all levels of society and produced hundreds of thousands of orphans.
- Often, the relatives of the orphans cannot handle the burden of caring for additional children, as they struggle to merely feed themselves.
- With help from Cross International, a local church is working to ensure that these desperate children get off the streets and into loving homes. It does so by providing food, clothes, education, and health care for the orphans, plus additional help for the families as an incentive.
- The church, Grace Ministries Mission, is a strong advocate of abstinence-based AIDS prevention, and considers the preaching of the Gospel an integral part of its mission to orphans.



## HIV/AIDS Pandemic in Zambia

- In 2007, there were **600,000 AIDS orphans** in Zambia.
- Among people aged 15 to 49, about **17 percent** were living with HIV/AIDS in 2006.
- **82 percent** of known causes of employee deaths are HIV-related.
- Life expectancy at birth is only **38.7 years**.



## Left Behind

Zambian women have a saying: “AIDS may kill me in months or years, but hunger will kill me and my family tomorrow.”

For three decades, the HIV/AIDS pandemic in Zambia has ravaged all levels of society while presenting particular challenges for the poorest of the poor. Desperate mothers, scraping by on less than a dollar a day, often plunge into a cycle of risky behavior as they struggle to provide for their children. Husbands, ignorant about how HIV is spread, will pass the infection on to their wives, and the end result is hundreds of thousands of innocent, orphaned children.

Sadly, the orphans outnumber adults who have the means to provide for them. They might be taken into the care of a grandparent or aunt, but often those relatives cannot feed them or pay for their schooling — especially if the relatives have children of their own. In many cases, the orphans end up fending for themselves on the streets.

One answer to the problem is to round up the children and put them in an orphanage. But institutionalization can deprive children of a personal, nurturing family life. Studies show that the better alternative is to entrust the children to the care of loving relatives or foster parents, while providing the material necessities for a healthy upbringing. Cross International has partnered with Grace Ministries Mission — a local church denomination — to supply food, clothes, education, and health care to orphans living with guardians who would otherwise lack the means to support them. The church also gives support to the adoptive families, who struggle to merely feed themselves.

“There are very strong family values that kept the ties of the community in Zambia for a long time,” said Grace Ministries Bishop John M. Ng’andu. “Our desire, even as we work with orphaned children, is to take care of these orphans in their homes, where they can relate to an uncle, they can relate to a grandmother, to a grandfather, to a brother, sister, auntie, uncle — and we take the help into those homes.”



## Holistic Intervention

The aid that Grace Ministries provides for orphans meets a variety of needs — from tuition and textbooks to clothing and protein-rich foods. Through this program, the children have something to contribute to their families, so they will not be seen as a burden.

Grace Ministries' philosophy of charity makes concern for the poor an integral part of — and not a competitor to — its commitment to Gospel preaching. The children who can read are given Bibles, while those who cannot read have opportunities to hear Bible lessons. Each month, when the orphans and their guardians arrive at church offices to receive their supplies, the distribution commences with a time of praise and worship. Bishop Ng'andu believes Christians should be known by their love, just like the church in the book of Acts that gained a reputation among the public for how its people treated each other.

Grace Ministries works hand-in-hand with other Zambian churches to advocate a spiritually-based approach to AIDS prevention. Their "ABCs of AIDS" include Abstinence, Being faithful, and most importantly, Christ. They teach that, while birth-control measures can fail, a Christ-centered life of sexual purity and monogamy is a sure way to avoid infection. Many Zambians believe AIDS can be cured by having sex with a virgin, or that they must "covenant" with evil spirits for blessings and protection. By educating families against such misconceptions and superstitions, Grace Ministries aims to cut off the root of the problem, not just soften the effects.



*Orphans and families supported by Grace Ministries are invited to participate in praise and worship services.*



## “Let the little children come...”

Innocent children should not have to suffer the life-altering and paralyzing consequences of HIV/AIDS. That is why Cross International is helping Grace Ministries Mission bring economic support and the hope of the Gospel to impoverished Zambian children who have lost one or both parents to this horrible disease.

The commitment has been made, and now Cross is depending on caring Christians to make the vision a reality. By joining us in our effort, you can bring health, nourishment, education, and a normal, loving childhood to poor orphans, while also helping to break the cycle of ignorance and desperation that perpetuates the HIV/AIDS crisis. Otherwise, many of these children will grow up alone on the dangerous streets, doing whatever they can to survive.

If Christ did not turn away the mothers who brought him their children to be blessed, how much more should we seek out those children who have no mothers to bring them to us? The sincerity of our faith is judged, not by the riches we accumulate, but by how we have used our possessions to help the widow and the orphan. We hope and pray you will help us spread the love of Christ to these precious children.

### **Our Promise to You!**

100 percent of the proceeds of this appeal will be used for this project. In the rare event that we receive more than needed to fund this project, additional gifts will be used for other urgent needs for the poor.