



Summer 2003  
Volume 3, Issue 1



# African Refugee Committee

ARC

Transforming Lives & Communities

## A New Page in Angola's History

J. Andrew Cole, President

Fighting between U.S. led forces and Iraq came to a crescendo after about three weeks; a week later aircraft carriers were returning to their homeports. In Angola, civil war dragged on for three decades, but the time for fighting seems to have come to a close there also. Now that fighting is over, other challenges arise. For Angolan refugees, peace in their home country means dramatic adjustments — they will be forced to return home. As good as "home" sounds, repatriation into a battle zone once intensely hostile and threatening, involves risk and the potential for re-traumatization. How will ARC respond? As 2002 was drawing to a close, the ARC Board was building a strategic plan in which we committed ourselves to three major thrusts for the year 2003.

### 1. Support refugees in transition

During this phase of repatriation supportive funding for Angolan refugees through the UNHCR will be slashed; this is a way to encourage repatriation. ARC, however, will continue to support programs that we have already developed; in fact, by the



Dr. Andrew Cole (right) with Pastor Evaristo Haka, of the Nangweshi Evangelical Church.

time you receive this newsletter teams will be in Africa.

The major responsibility for carrying out our initiatives is in the hands of ARC Field Coordinators, Maurice Kapuka in Zambia, and Samuel Abel in Namibia, along with the scores of volunteers that support our cause. As we further pursue our commitments in Zambia and Namibia, our energies will be directed by an overarching emphasis: How to help refugees transition back to Angola.

### 2. Educational needs in rural Angola

As Angolans begin to return home, questions haunt them: "To what will we be returning? Persecution? Hunger? No work? Will we find a place where we can fit in?" The ARC Board is convinced that rebuilding the educational system is the best way not

only to build a nation, but also to incorporate refugees into the rebuilding process. As you can imagine, this is an enormous challenge and we are all excitedly anticipating the results of a pilot program being initiated this summer.

### 3. Organizational restructuring

One of ARC's distinctives has always been the desire to see lives transformed — our own as well as the lives of our beneficiaries. We believe that through the collaborative sharing of talents and resources all of us can be mutually encouraged, enriched and strengthened. But if we are to honor the sacrifices you, our donors, have made then we must continually strive to develop our organization. Proving ourselves effective in the execution of time-limited projects is a starting point; simultaneously we strive to clarify and articulate a transcendent direction that drives what we do. We can be satisfied only when we have created an organization, that by virtue of its values, practices and accomplishments, continually proves itself to be a model of excellence and honors the One we serve.

*"To those who by persistence in doing good seek glory, and honor and immortality, he will give eternal life."*

Romans 2:6&7

Coming...

A New Name!

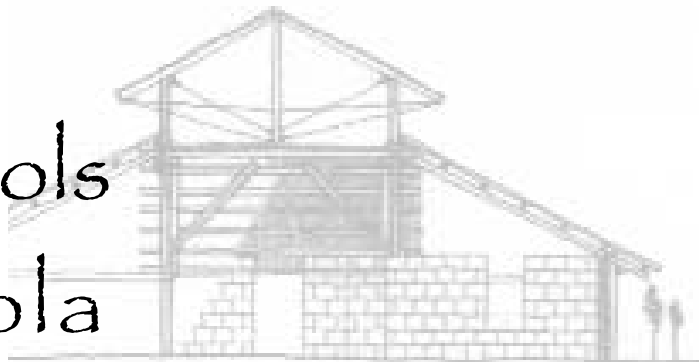
A New Look!

The repatriation process has begun, and soon many of our refugee friends and partners will no longer be refugees.

It's clear that the timing is right for the African Refugee Committee to transition to a new name that will reflect the changes that are occurring among those we serve.

Please watch for an official announcement this summer!

# Schools for Angola



## A Pilot Project

The future of Angola rests in the hands of its human infrastructure. But how well prepared are Angolans for the task of rebuilding? In rural areas, literacy rates are currently estimated to be less than 5%. Illiteracy hinders the development of a democratic society, limits participation in the world economy and allows superstitions, arising from animistic beliefs, to dominate the political, economic, social and religious arenas. Thousands of ex-

combatants know only how to make war; lacking vocational training, will they resort to what they have always known?

According to UNICEF, it is rare for children in Angola who do have educational opportunities, to remain in school for more than two years. The dropout rate after the first grade is especially high among girls. Given these circumstances, does Angola have the human capacity to rebuild their country?

While there are many ways in which ARC can help energize and reinvigorate Angola's human resources, we have come to believe that it is by supporting the educational system that we can have our greatest impact. Through education we can most effectively empower people to help themselves and further the betterment of the greatest numbers of people.

For the year 2003, ARC has embarked upon a pilot program that will involve partnering with congregations within Angola's Bié Province to assess the best way to help rebuild the rural school system.

*(continued on page 3)*

"Through education we can most effectively empower people to help themselves..."

## Summer Team Schedule

Nangweshi Team I  
June 17-July 23

Angola Team  
June 17-July 9

Nangweshi Team II  
July 7-July 23



Teams of volunteers travel to Namibia, Zambia, and now Angola, to serve in practical ways. Seeds of compassion and collaboration are nurtured, relationships are built, and amidst poverty and need, team members find a spirit that challenges and changes them.

While team members set out to make an impact in the lives of others, they are often surprised to discover a profound impact has been made in their own lives —

## Pilgrimage of Service

for these trips are about people, involvement, and relationships that capture our hearts.

This summer, there are three teams traveling to Africa. While each team has specific goals and objectives, we are striving to keep the big picture in view — peace in Angola and the return of the refugees. Eight team members will travel to Lusaka and from there to the Nangweshi Refugee Camp in Zambia. Six of these are young women, who will spend four weeks in the camp with a primary focus to teach English as a Second Language.

Twelve people will travel to Bié Province in Angola to inaugurate the rural school program and help build the first school. After three weeks, most of the Angola team will return home, while five will continue on to Nangweshi, joined by a team of three who will meet them in Johannesburg and travel to the camp together. This group will focus on the work with the Mercy Teams as well as cast vision to our refugee partners and enlist their help in rebuilding the rural schools in Angola. ■



Martinho

# Eight Graves

By Megan Cole

I am always drawn to his face. His features beg me to wonder what lies behind them. His skin is tawny brown and it always looks so smooth and soft, gleaming as if it was just lotioned. I wonder how after 27 years of war it has remained untouched by worry. The entire Angolan countryside holds tribute to the war. The buildings, bombed out and salted with bullets, can barely support their own weight. Deserted tanks lay at the side of the road, ravaged by mines. Yet somehow, with about 60 years behind him, Martinho Evaristo still has the face of a child.

My father and I are here for a week exploring the country, traveling in the back of a beat up Land Rover with several of our African friends. Today Martinho rides with us. He is quiet except for the laughter that repeatedly escapes from his throat, lightening our moods as we head out for one of the remote villages. When traveling in Africa car trouble is inevitable. So as expected, the Land Rover gets stuck in a muddy field. It appears that we are in the middle of nowhere but it is

soon revealed that this area has a story behind it. While the other men begin to work on freeing the truck, Martinho leads my dad and me to a grassless patch a couple hundred feet away, where eight mounds of dirt rise from the ground. Eight graves holding husbands, fathers, brothers and friends. Martinho tells us his war story. He explains that a group of government soldiers recently drove over a UNITA mine, not far from this place. The survivors went to the nearest village, found all the men (there were only eight) and killed them. One was his brother and one was a pastor who had been a close friend. Now all that remains are dirt heaps and memories.

Killing is a community event—a show for the villagers and for the families of each victim. Straight shootings in this type of

“The stories you hear but never believe. Stories too incredible to be invented.”



situation are rare. Death by bullets is too quick, too painless. A soldier doesn't kill to end a life; he kills to start a precedent. Method is everything. There is a point to be made, so slower is better. Often, soldiers will stand a man in front of a crowd and cut off pieces of his body one by one, starting with his fingertips and working their way up as his family watches forbidden to even cry out. This is one of those stories. The stories you hear but never believe. Stories too incredible to be invented. Here, these stories are life. Martinho has never before revealed his sorrow to us but now it drips from his eyes, watering the dirt of his brother's grave.

By the time we arrive back at the truck it has been dislodged, so we pile in and move on. Just like that we drive away and in minutes Martinho is laughing again. ■

High School Students Inspired to Serve Those in Need



Wheeling High School students formed a refugee club and organized a drive to fill a container with used clothing and other needed items to be sent to Nangweshi Refugee Camp.



In a school-wide drive to provide much needed school supplies for refugee children, New Trier High School students also filled a container destined for Nangweshi Refugee Camp.

## Schools for Angola

(continued from page 2)

In addition to encouraging a curriculum that embraces indigenous culture and language our aim is to help equip people to succeed within the dominant culture and to further the rebuilding of their nation.

To determine how we can best solve the educational problem in Angola, teams have been assembled to devise the needed strategy and

organizational structure to achieve such a goal. In May, C. Donald Cole travelled to Bié to lay some ground work. In June, an ARC Mission team will socialize the program in Zambia among refugees who will eventually return to their homes. Another team will launch the program within Angola. The charter for teams working on the school program is to develop a clear and detailed plan

whereby congregations within Angola and refugees with whom ARC has partnered can be easily enlisted to join a rebuilding program all across Angola. A successful pilot program will provide an effective, real world roadmap that other energized friends of ARC can follow to build schools, increase literacy, rebuild and transform lives. ■

# Angolan Pastors Bring a Spirit of Reconciliation

As reported by **Maurice Kapuka, ARC Field Coordinator**

## ARC Sends Two Pastors on a Mission of Peace

In March 2003, Pastors **Jose Neto** and **Bernardo Capeio** of Angola, accompanied by ARC Field Coordinator, **Maurice Kapuka**, were sent by ARC to bring a message of peace, encouragement and reconciliation to the people of Nangweshi Refugee Camp in Zambia.

These excerpts from Mr. Kapuka's report reveal the profound impact of their visit to the camp.

**O**n March 21 the Pastors were picked up from Lusaka International Airport around 11:30 hours. When the team arrived at Nangweshi Refugee Camp, Pastor Haka and refugee brothers and sisters led by the youth choir waited near the camp barrier gate.

The visitors had to disembark and walk to the compound with the singing crowd. The

“For a very long time, Angolans were very suspicious of people from different provinces...”

welcoming ceremony was very very touching. Pastor Capeio was mobbed by his long lost relatives who could not believe what they were seeing. Sunday March 23 started with a church service [with approximately 5,000 in attendance]. Pastor Jose Neto was earlier invited to preach, and Pastor Bernardo Capeio translated from Portuguese into Umbundu.

Pastor Neto told the church about Dr. Andrew Cole's parents whose love for the Angolan people is such that despite past experience in Angola, Charles Donald Cole makes at least two visits in a year to Angola. Emotions during the service were quite high, and I could see some people going out every now and then to let tears flow freely, then come back.

Pastors Jose and Bernardo gave words of encouragement and invited as many people as possible to write to their relatives and friends in Angola, offering themselves to ensure that every letter would be delivered. I talked about the team

from the USA coming in June and July 2003.

A very moving farewell ceremony was held, and as we were leaving the gate, we saw something else. A group of youngsters from all directions rushed towards our vehicle waving for us to stop. They came to

us and gave me small neatly folded white pieces of paper, saying they

were letters that I should please give to them to their American friends. I recognized most of these kids, some of them were friends of Megan, Rachel, Stephanie, Ross and Jessie Williamson. I remembered too that some of these kids were the ones we found waiting for us outside the camp during the visit by Dr. Cole and Megan in December 2002.

“The combination of Pastor Bernardo Capeio and Pastor Jose Neto brought 'healing' to many refugees and indeed myself.”

Moments like these, and a few others, are the ones that have made a big mark in my life because I see very clearly the importance of visits by ARC members to refugee camps. The wonderful relationships that are established between the brothers and sisters in the Lord from the USA, and the Angolan refugee community in the camp are best seen / felt / experienced than told.

The combination of Pastor Bernardo Capeio and Pastor Jose Neto brought "healing" to many

refugees and indeed to myself. For a very very long time, Angolans were very suspicious of people from



Maurice Kapuka

different Provinces. For example, many from the North of Angola and those from the South held each other in distrust. The visibly true harmonious relationship between these two men of God made a very big impact in the lives of our Nangweshi friends, most of whom come from one part of the country, and perhaps grew up indoctrinated that brother Neto's people and brother Capeio's people were

enemies. A few of us today know that Angolans are and can be one people. These two brothers have lived in Angola and saw what war

can do to a people and a nation, yet they prayed that God shows them the way to where their brothers and sisters in Christ were scattered or concentrated. Thanks be to God for ARC who facilitated their visit to Nangweshi.

To those who may not know this, I want to let you know that our trip to and from Nangweshi was facilitated by ARC-USA. You may not expect issues like this to be mentioned in a report of this nature, but I am unable to be silent on such an important matter as this. ARC

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# Angolan Pastors

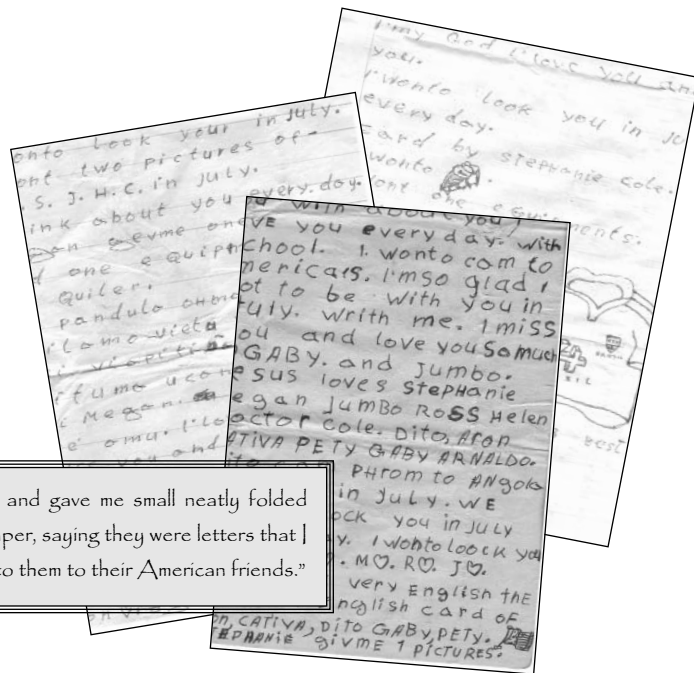
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provided funds for our supplies, transport, etc. We lacked nothing, and we know that there are men and women in the USA who have generously supported ARC's efforts in helping the most vulnerable here in Africa. I am also aware that everything we do in ARC is first prayed for, and therefore there is no doubt in my mind that those of you who make these funds available pray that they be used to the glory of God. We went to Nangweshi to see some of the most vulnerable and disadvantaged people here on earth,

and you made this trip possible. I thank you and pray that the same measure you have used to give, be the same that God uses to give you. And let His will be done in your life. If it is to prosper, then be prosperous. If it is to bless, then be blessed also.

Maurice Kapuka

"They came to us and gave me small neatly folded white pieces of paper, saying they were letters that I should please give to them to their American friends."



*If we pull together...*



*We can make a Difference!*

<p><b>Please join us!</b></p> <p>Together we can build schools, increase literacy and rebuild Angola.</p> <p>Please use the enclosed envelope to make your tax-deductible contribution.</p>	<p><b>Your gift will make a difference:</b></p> <p><b>\$25 Student Supplies</b> Paper, notebooks, pencils, school smocks.</p> <p><b>\$100 Teacher Supplies</b> Chalkboards, chalk, dictionaries, teaching material.</p> <p><b>\$500 Library Supplies</b> Books and reference materials.</p> <p><b>\$5,000 Village School Building</b> Materials to build a village school building.</p>
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# African Refugee Committee

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*Naomi & Don Cole*

## A Special Message from Pastor Cole

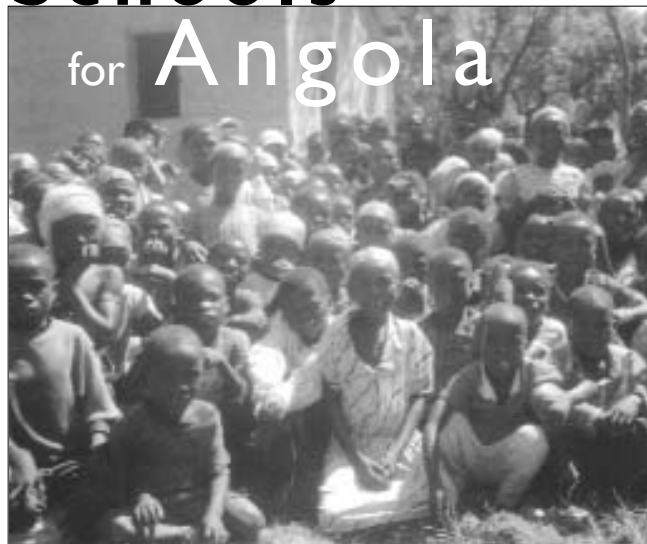
Dear Friends,

ARC could not choose a better focus than primary education in Angola. For more than a quarter of a century schools in rural areas were closed. Nobody attended school, with the result that an entire generation grew up totally illiterate. Few men or women under the age of 35 or 40 years of age know how to read.

The need for primary schools in Angola is overwhelming. The potential for good by the building of schools is incalculable.

**Pastor C. Donald Cole**  
Moody Radio Pastor  
Former Missionary to Angola

## Schools for Angola



*Children at  
Chilonda  
who will be  
among  
many to  
attend the  
first school  
to be built  
this  
summer.*

## ARC Annual Benefit Dinner

Our Annual Benefit Dinner will be on Saturday, November 15, 2003. If you are interested in hosting a table of 10 for this great event, please contact us by email at [chilonda@aol.com](mailto:chilonda@aol.com).