

Zambia Outreach Embraces Ostracized Street Boys

✖ Zambia is one of the 30 poorest countries in the world.

According to SOS Children, over 30 percent of its children under the age of 15 are orphans, and half a million young children live on the nation's streets.

The street children go particularly overlooked. Most suffer from various diseases and are treated with suspicion and disgust as they try to help load buses.

"These young men have pretty much been shunned by society there, just because most of them have some kind of addiction," explains Greg Yoder, vice president of Christian World Outreach. "They live on the streets. They live in the poorest parts of town."

The street boys of Ndola are sometimes marginalized even by Christians, who fear what the boys are capable of. "If they go to church, people suspect they're there to steal," says Yoder.

One missionary couple has been able to see past the addictions and stigmas to the God-breathed souls that exist within those young men. This Christian World Outreach couple decided a while ago to befriend the boys loading buses at their bus stop. As they got to know more and more boys, the friendships soon progressed into a full ministry. Now two groups of what the missionaries call "nephews" meet regularly.

The groups, numbering about 50 boys each, provide care and life for kids who have been overlooked their whole lives. While together, all nephews play board games, enjoy meals and study the Bible.

The outreach has not only given dignity and self-worth to many, but has changed hearts for eternity. "Many of these

young men have become Christians just because we've shown them some love, and care about them as people," Yoder says.

One group is for older nephews, and another for younger. Yoder says the second ministry to younger boys actually stemmed from a desire of the older boys: They wanted to help other young lives transform as theirs had.

God is moving in tremendous ways, but the ministry is not without heartache. Yoder says it seems that every month, another boy dies from disease. Since the boys often don't have family that cares enough to support a decent burial, Christian World Outreach provides dignified services for the young men God so deeply cares for.

The budding ministry has many needs, not the least of which is prayer. Pray that the missionaries and other Christian workers there would continue to make a positive impact in the lives of these boys. Pray that churches would accept the boys with open arms rather than turned backs. Pray that the young men would be changed completely.