

The City is a Living Organism: What Zambia Taught Me About Community and the Soul

What's popping, people?

It's Dante getting my morning started here in the *Garden of Eden*.

Welcome to **Fairmount Park, Philadelphia** — the heart of the city.

You know, I like thinking of the city this way.

Like, **City Hall** should technically be the heart, right?

It's the center of the municipality.

The mayor sits there. The courtrooms are there. Things happen there.

But then you've got the subways, the bus lines, the roads — arteries.

And the people that ride them?

The ones who operate the buses, drive the cars?

They're the bloodstream.

They're the nutrients flowing through the organism.

The city is alive.

A chaotic, beautiful organism of order and madness.

The Micro-Interactions That Make a City

I like chatting with people on the bus.

You start to see the same folks over and over again.

There's a kind of rhythm to it.

It's fun. It's social.
But at the same time, living in the city can be incredibly isolating.

You live in a condo.
A box stacked on top of someone else's box.
You ride the elevator. Say what's up.
Then scurry back into your own little cube.

There's no real depth to it.

No communal thread unless you *go out of your way* to find it.

That's why I joined a boxing gym.
Just so I could experience some kind of repetition —
Some kind of *tribe*.

What the Village Gave Me That the City Can't

Back in Zambia, when I was volunteering with the Peace Corps,
I lived in **Panta Village** — Luapula Province, Samia District.

 *Nshiva Ichibemba. Nfwa Ukutandala. Ku Zambia, Uku Bomba in Ichishiba.
Nalalupwandi.*

I speak Bemba. I worked in Zambia. I give thanks.

I was a **fish farmer**, working with youth groups,
spending my time *fully immersed* in village life.
And I swear, I became part of the tribe — a surrogate son in my host family.

When I arrived, my host father literally presented me a **goat hanging from a tree**.
Like, “Here you go. Kill it. Let's eat.”
We feasted all week. Sat on the floor. Ate together every morning, noon, and night.

***There was no “mine” and “yours.”
There was only “ours.”***

Everyone Had a Role

In the village:

- Mothers walked home each morning with firewood stacked on their heads, babies tied to their backs.
- Men were building churches and homes.
- Boys were forming bricks out of mud and sand.
- Girls were sweeping floors and preparing food.

Everyone contributed.

Everyone had a role.

And what blew my mind?

They thrived.

Even without running water.

Even without electricity.

Even without stoves or fridges.

They smiled.

They woke up joyous.

They had *meaning*.

What Held Them Together: God

At the center of the village:

The Church.

Everyone gathered there — not just Sundays.

Some went every day.

***The people strove to become like Jesus.
Through sacrifice. Through service.***

They treated their neighbors like themselves.
There were no police.
No bureaucracies.
No government agencies.

**The family was the government.
The tribe was the law.
The church was the soul.**

You wanna talk about freedom?
It was this:

Becoming a slave to God... is the highest form of freedom.

When everyone is a slave to God,
everyone becomes a servant to the good.
And through that service — the entire village **thrives**.

What the City's Missing

Compare that to modern life:

- People piss on toilet seats and don't clean it.
- No one talks to their neighbors.
- Everything is commodified and isolated.

We don't strive to be like Jesus.
We strive to "get ours."
And then we wonder why we feel alone.

Experience Is the Real Teacher

Living in that village gave me a **new paradigm**.

And that's the beauty of **travel**.
Not the touristy kind —
but throwing yourself into the unknown.

You don't need more books. You need more experience.
That's where real wisdom comes from.

What I Brought Back

Now I live in Philly with:

- Running water
- A stove
- A deep freezer full of beef from a local farmer
- Wi-Fi
- Bitcoin

But that simplicity I saw in Zambia still lives in me.

And actually — you know what?
Technology **could** help those villages, too.

They all have phones now. Airtel, spotty service, yeah —
but it's *something*.

If they had **Bitcoin access**, maybe they could:

- Save wealth
- Leave the village for better jobs in Lusaka

- Build homes
- Store food with electric fridges

Maybe tech isn't the enemy after all.

Maybe it's the bridge.

Because as beautiful as that village life was,

opportunity matters too.

And maybe someone from a fish pond in Zambia
ends up in a mansion one day.