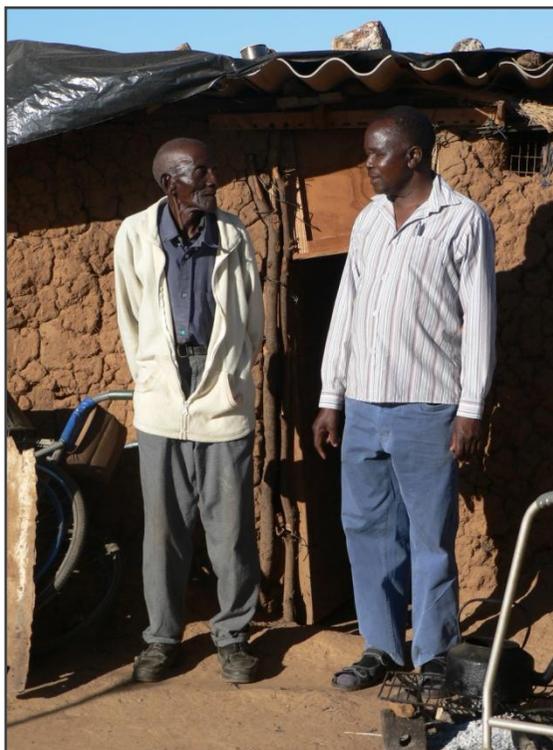


## Zimbabwe: so many victims – and different kinds of poverty

Re-visiting Zimbabwe a few weeks ago during my sabbatical I encountered a great number of victims. In a sense all Zimbabweans are victims of the totalitarian rule of Robert Mugabe, even those who have benefitted from his patronage and become corrupted in the process. But let me single out just two of the very different victims I met on my travels.

### *Prayer, song and dance ...*

The first is Mr Right Zanza, a frail and wizened old man who looks every one of his 82 years. He can be seen on the left in the photo alongside Pastor Albert Chatindo who introduced us. He was one of the 220 destitute heads of households in Killarney (outside Bulawayo) to whom Albert and his team were delivering a monthly allocation of 10 kgs of maize meal on behalf of the *Fund*. This vital life support had been received, as ever, with jubilation, prayer, song and dance by an excited crowd. Then, as the crowd dispersed, Mr Zanza, clutching his precious bag of maize meal, led Albert and me across the parched scrubland to his home. As can be seen in the photo, “home” for him and his even more frail-looking wife, Esther, proved to be nothing more than a flimsy shack constructed of broken asbestos sheets, scrap metal and plastic sheeting on rough mud and daub walls. The whole measured no more than 12 feet by 8 feet.



### *“Clear away the filth”*

Mr Zanza’s life story was one of unremitting hardship, compounded in recent years by the brutality of the present regime. Of Malawian origin, he came to Zimbabwe in 1964 and found work at a nearby cement factory. In retirement and having no place to call home, he and his wife joined many hundreds of other destitute people relocating to the informal settlement at Killarney where they could build their own shack on the bare wasteland – without water, power or sanitation. The first shack they built was rather better constructed than the one which I saw, warmer in winter and better protected from the summer rains. But in 2005 that

modest dwelling was razed to the ground by Mugabe’s armed thugs who stormed across this settlement and thousands of others like it across Zimbabwe. The military-style “Operation Murambatsvina” (meaning “clear away the filth”) was underway - one of a number of crimes against humanity for which the regime has still to be brought to justice. The UN estimates that 700,000 of Zimbabwe’s poorest lost their homes and livelihoods in the blitzkrieg. For the frail, elderly couple I met at Killarney it was catastrophic. They lost everything in the trauma, and it was some years before they even dared to return – and rebuild. Today they barely survive on their small allocation of maize meal, but they thank the Lord for that support and also for the grace that has brought them, in Albert, a truly caring Pastor and friend.

### *Grace and healing*

This story illustrates one aspect of our work in Zimbabwe - combating physical poverty. The story of the second is very different. Again accompanying Pastor Albert but this time to a more remote site called “Springs Farm”, I met one of the war vets. Let’s call him Comrade Moyo, he was one of those who had threatened Albert when he tried to set up a church in the area some years ago. In fact it was more than a bit of intimidation, for Albert was arrested and held by a hostile group who were seriously debating whether he should be “disappeared”. The only way out for this man of God was to give an undertaking he would summon the church and let the war vets

address them – but only, as Albert bravely insisted, after a time of prayer! It is one of the many stories of heroic Christian witness that must be written up one day. Suffice it to say, the Comrade Moyo I met is now an elder in the church in Springs Farm and Albert's right-hand man there in ministry.

Here is another of the victims, one of thousands schooled in violence and hate and brain-washed with propaganda in order to serve the cynical political agenda of the regime. Again praise be that, through the courageous witness of Pastor Albert, this man has come to experience the grace and healing of Jesus. This is another aspect of the work we are hugely privileged to share in – combating the widespread and intense spiritual hunger among so many Zimbabweans. The volunteers whom we partner in mission are equally concerned with both the physical and the spiritual hunger so prevalent in the country.

### ***Your support***

Shortly after returning to the UK I received a further message from Pastor Albert. Again he asked me to convey warmest thanks to those in this country who are supporting the Fund, and he reminded me of the simple message I had received from those living so close to the edge when I visited the community at Killarney: “your support means we will continue to live”.

*Graham*

June 2012



### **Henry Olonga Concert**

What a talented man! Powerful and tender songs, great humour, clear analysis of the plight of thousands in Zimbabwe, vivid Christian witness and deep convictions about justice and truth. That's what we enjoyed, when a good crowd filled Priory Methodist Church, Bedford, on Sunday evening 29<sup>th</sup> April. A PowerPoint presentation added illustrations of the work of ZVSF and, with Gift Aid to be reclaimed, about £2,100 was raised for the fund. If you came along – warmest thanks for your support.

*David Winwood*

### ***Treasurer's Report***

Because of the change to the fund's status, my update this time is largely administrative (see the attached slip.) However I can report that, at the heart of our work, we have received over £30,000 so far this year and have sent £31,000 to our partners in Zimbabwe. They in turn have been able to purchase 1000 10kg bags of maize each month – and Graham's report describes the importance of one such bag.

Thank you for your continuing generosity

*Christine*

## **ZIMBABWE VICTIMS' SUPPORT FUND**

(Registered Charity Number 1145569)



### **MID-YEAR REPORT** **2012**

[www.zimbabwevictimssupportfund.org](http://www.zimbabwevictimssupportfund.org)



### ***Trustees :***

***David Winwood, Graham Shaw,  
John Lark, Christine Jones (Treasurer)  
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