

Hope beyond the death of hope

From time to time here in the UK, cases of appalling child abuse come to light. We are shocked to learn that those entrusted with the care of little ones can abuse them so cruelly, sometimes resulting in death. The trauma is compounded when those who might have intervened to stop the abuse – doctors and social workers – failed to respond to the signs which should have alerted them to pending tragedy.

In Zimbabwe today we have another case of abuse – abuse on a grand scale – of all the people by its wayward leaders. The signs of this abuse are there in the widespread hunger, poverty and suffering that are entirely preventable within a country blessed with rich natural resources and agricultural potential. And yet again, those who should be alerting the world to this tragedy have chosen to remain silent. Following the recent elections which have been described as “a master-class of electoral fraud”, the leaders of Zimbabwe’s neighbours, notably South Africa, have shamelessly signed them off as free and fair.

Zimbabweans have been stunned into silence by the scale of the fraud. So often in the past they have cried “foul”, but who is listening? A profound sense of grief and mourning covers the nation. Is this finally the death of hope?

We stand in solidarity with our sisters and brothers in that broken nation. We pray with them and for them. We know that corruption and abuse cannot have the last word when the sovereign Lord is the God of truth and justice. Our Christian faith is rooted in the resurrection hope beyond the death of hope.

So we continue to play our small part in partnership with our sovereign God and his faithful servants in Zimbabwe. And just how crucial a difference this small part is to the several thousand who rely upon it was dramatically illustrated recently. Because of a glitch in banking transfer services our normal monthly allocation of funds for the purchase of maize meal was delayed. Following our treasurer’s swift intervention the bank’s error was corrected but that delay of just a few weeks contributed to one fatality. In Mazwi, near Bulawayo, nearly half the community who rely on that small monthly provision of maize meal resorted to scavenging for food on the municipal rubbish dump, which is a major health hazard. A 34-year-old father of three suffered severe food poisoning and our volunteer partner, Pastor Albert, rushed him to hospital. However he later died because his body, so weakened by malnutrition, was not able to resist the infection. Such is the thin line that separates so many from starvation.

As if the life-saving relief feeding was not enough of a challenge on its own, we are now faced with another. Pastor Albert’s vehicle, an Isuzu 4-wheel drive, generously donated some years ago by St Michael’s Church, Highgate in London, is now – 400,000 kms later – worn out and beyond repair. If he is to continue his life-saving ministry to remote rural communities, he must have a replacement vehicle. Yet ministering as he and his team of Pastors do to some of the poorest of the poor, he has no resources of his own. We in ZVSF rely upon Albert as a key volunteer partner and have been inspired by his ministry combating both physical and spiritual hunger. So we want to play our part in securing that replacement vehicle. Therefore, just as St Michael’s Church in London has raised a further £ 2,000 for this purpose, we feel we too must commit to getting Pastor Albert back on the road, so far as funds permit, and without reducing any of the crucial relief feeding.

In so doing we, along with all God’s faithful servants in Zimbabwe and you our wonderful supporters in this country, press on beyond the death of hope, towards the light of the Easter dawn.

Graham

Treasurer's Report

Following our charity registration I want to thank supporters who have updated their standing orders and gift aid declarations this year. Our new bank account allows us to track donations more easily so I am very happy to receive donations directly to our bank account – which saves you the price of a stamp! The account details are below but if you are sending donations from abroad please contact me for the fuller details you will need.

Bank: CAF Bank Ltd
Sort Code: 40-52-40
Account name: Zimbabwe Victims' Support Fund
Account No: 00022807

We aim to keep our costs to a minimum (e.g. using emails and electronic transfers) so if you are comfortable with using these methods please ensure that we have your email address. This helps us compensate in a small way for rising prices in Zimbabwe. The Bulawayo team budget \$4,500 each month to purchase food distributed by Pastor Albert's team. In September 2012 that bought 10 tonnes; this year it will buy 7.5 tonnes – that's 250 fewer families to whom they can distribute a 10kg allowance. What dreadful decisions for our partners to have to make.

Christine



A thin line separates so many from starvation.
Photo courtesy Tearfund

Events and fundraising

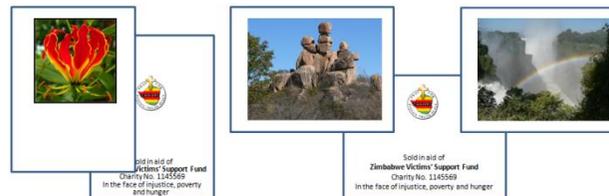
Sunday 6 October – Harvest Celebration at Formby Methodist Church where Graham Shaw will be the speaker, morning and evening.

Saturday 12 October – Concert by National Methodist Youth Brass Band at Priory Methodist Church, Bedford.

Please pray for and support these events as you are able. Further details of these are on our website - www.zimbabwevictimssupportfund.org/reports

Graham mentioned the money raised from St Michael's Church. We also thank our friends in Arvika, Sweden and Beldon, Australia who did a sponsored marathon. Together they have raised another £1000. Coffee mornings in, amongst other places, Falmouth, Wareham and Hull, have raised nearly £800 so far this year. Thank you.

Cards We have produced single-fold, card notelets in three designs. They are blank inside, and have our logo (digitally re-mastered by Chris Sammons from an original design by John Lark) and mission statement on the back. They are on sale for £1 each or £4 for a pack of 5 plus 60p per order for postage. Please contact David or Graham if you wish to purchase them.



ZIMBABWE VICTIMS' SUPPORT FUND

(Registered Charity Number 1145569)



MID-YEAR REPORT 2013

www.zimbabwevictimssupportfund.org



Pastor Albert with members of new church at Spring Farm

Trustees :

**David Winwood, Graham Shaw,
Christine Jones (Treasurer),
Chris Sworn (Secretary)**

E-mails:

david.j.winwood@btinternet.com
umngane@btinternet.com
christinejones@email.com
zvsf.csworn@btinternet.com