

ZIMBABWE VICTIMS' SUPPORT FUND

(Registered Charity Number 1145569)



MID-YEAR REPORT 2014

www.zimbabwevictimssupportfund.org

Trustees :

Graham Shaw, Christine Jones (Treasurer), Chris Sworn (Secretary)

E-mails:

umngane@btinternet.com, christinejones@email.com, zvsf.csworn@gmail.com

Grace in a dry season

Imagine having the opportunity to travel over 6,000 miles to visit a humanitarian project to which you are passionately committed, and being able to see for yourself the way in which God is blessing it still. I experienced that joy in April-May when I revisited Zimbabwe. I travelled far and wide from my base in Bulawayo to see at first-hand the relief feeding supported by the Fund - at the same time receiving updates on the situation from our marvellous team of volunteer partners. It was a delight also to be driven around for much of my travels by Pastor Albert in the donated Land Cruiser featured prominently in our last report. The vehicle (pictured below) is already proving of huge benefit to this ministry.



The new vehicle in use near Spring Farm

Reports from Famine Early Warning Systems Network (FEWS NET) had already alerted me to the fact that poor households in the south west are stressed as a result of funding shortfalls among the big relief organisations. And I saw many examples of extreme poverty and hunger as I toured the rural areas.

Our partners on the ground also confirmed the negative impact on our feeding projects of even the smallest increase in the price of maize meal. In such a volatile market any number of factors can trigger a price spike. For our part we are not always able to increase the funds remitted to Zimbabwe to offset any price hikes and so, sadly, at times the amount of maize meal distributed has been reduced. However I am pleased to report that some of this

shortfall has been made good from maize donated by those who have themselves benefitted from the feeding scheme in the recent past and who now have a small surplus from their own modest harvest this year. It was humbling to see this amazing display of generosity from those living so close to the edge themselves.

With Pastor Albert I travelled to a new settlement in Mazwi, some 30 miles west of Bulawayo. There I saw 200 very basic, two-roomed, houses, each with an outside toilet and a small plot of land adjoining. These had been allocated to some of the former residents of Kilarney, the squatter camp on the other side of Bulawayo from which the residents had been violently ejected by the military. Now these same impoverished and abused people – I should say those of their number who have survived the terror of the past nine years – are able, at last, to live with a degree of dignity and security. Much of the credit for eventually bringing about this change of heart on the part of the authorities must go to Pastor Albert who has stood with these vulnerable people and championed their cause through thick and thin. Albert for his part has no hesitation in calling this transformation an answer to prayer. I have no doubt it is exactly that – an answer to prayer – though at the same time it must be said that without the steely resolve of this humble servant of God it would never have come about.

What a privilege then to be associated with such a ministry to some of the poorest and most vulnerable in a country still suffering under oppressive and uncaring rule.

Warmest thanks to you our faithful and ever-generous supporters who sustain this transforming work of grace.

Graham



Pastor Albert on one of his regular rounds

David Winwood

Over twelve years ago word came through from the Methodist Church, Bulawayo, Zimbabwe that they were seeking to support many vulnerable people, often homeless and desperately hungry. As a result David Winwood, Clem Frank and John Lark, who had previously served the Church in Zimbabwe, set up an informal trust with the aim of making the needs known around the UK Churches and raising funds to enable food to be purchased.

Under the Chairmanship of Rev David Winwood the work has prospered and become a registered charity. David instigated many initiatives to raise awareness and to raise funds. Just one example of many are the concerts which he arranged with Henry Olonga to perform at Epsom and Bedford.

Regrettably for personal reasons David has had to resign as Chairman. This is a great loss to the Fund. We express a big thank you for all his efforts and pray that a replacement, with a similar love and concern for suffering people in Zimbabwe, will soon be found.

Treasurer's Report

It is one of my duties to initiate a transfer of funds to Bulawayo every two or three months. I estimate how much will be in our account and the likely US dollar exchange rate when the transfer goes through. Sometimes I have doubted whether we will have enough to meet our commitment and yet time after time I have had those doubts confounded. A number of times recently the exchange rate has been in our favour and saved us over £300 a month; next time we will be helped by the lower maize prices in Zimbabwe due to good harvest – down 14% from the high of \$630 a tonne. But more often it is because one of our supporters has been moved to send in a donation that has made up any shortfall – and more!

Whilst the last of our founder members might be stepping down from the administration of the Fund, the vision they had continues and is sustained by your generosity and by God's grace.

Christine

73 Robin Hood Crescent,
Knaphill, Woking, GU21 2NB

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

Chris Sworn

For email users, please note the new email address (csworn@gmail.com) for our Secretary.