

Zimbabwe IN Meltdown

The words stopped me in my tracks. A short pithy message from a friend and colleague in Bulawayo, Zimbabwe. A lady with a passion for helping the vulnerable poor. A faithful disciple of Jesus who daily does the impossible in order to stretch limited, finite resources to meet unending human need. And a down-to-earth person at that, not given to exaggeration. In a short e-mail she wrote:

“Keep praying for donors. The country has finally reached meltdown.”

Her words brought into sharp focus the many dire reports I had read in recent weeks on deteriorating conditions within the country. How does a country already stripped of its assets by a corrupt ruling elite get any worse? What happens next when an economy already in intensive care (unemployment above 90 per cent) hits a new crisis like running out of hard currency? The answer is, no one knows but watch the unfolding disaster in Zimbabwe and we soon will.



The 2016 harvest ruined by drought conditions

To compound the wretchedness of the poor 2016 saw a severe drought that has virtually wiped out the harvest. The result – famine conditions spreading across the country, impacting first on the poorest. Emaciated adults fainting with hunger, children too weak to walk to school, and severely malnourished toddlers dying.

That is where the people of Zimbabwe are today, and hence the desperate plea of one who cares:

“Keep praying for donors. The country has finally reached meltdown.”

*The bigger NGOs and Aid Agencies face an appalling dilemma. Not only are their donor funds very much reduced because of other major crises around the globe, but the Zimbabwean authorities insists on any relief supplies being channelled through the government - which patently cannot be trusted. Which is where the relief feeding of **Zimbabwe Victims Support Fund** becomes even more valuable to those in desperate need.*

This is the context in which I write, and in a series of short reports from Zimbabwe over the next few months I hope to keep you up-to-date with the developing crisis and, just as important, bring you some of the stories of the miracles of help and healing that our compassionate God is doing among these desperate people – with funds provided through the generosity of donors in the UK.





Calling the children to receive e'pap

*I start today with mention of a new wonder nutritional food called **e'pap** which we are now including in our relief feeding programme. E'pap is a carefully blended mix of soya and other ingredients, enriched and fortified with vitamins and minerals. It is specially formulated and served in measured quantities to ensure the best possible absorption of nutrients by the body. An added bonus is that it does not require cooking. It can be prepared in warm or cold water and so eliminates the need for heating – which in rural Zimbabwe often means gathering firewood and so denuding the environment. And the results in improving the health of the severely malnourished, even after a short course of e'pap, have been dramatic.*

*Just one example must suffice for now. The little girl in the photo is Sibonginkosi. Her mother reports that before she was put on the e'pap feeding programme Sibonginkosi often missed school because she was too sickly to attend. Her belly was distended and her hair sparse – tell-tale signs of serious malnutrition. But look at the bright little girl in the photo today after being fed on a course of e'pap. Her eyes shine, her hair is starting to grow again, the distended belly has disappeared – and now she never misses a day's school. Just one of the miracle results of this feeding programme that **Zimbabwe Victims' Support Fund** is financing from our donors' generosity.*



Sibonginkosi

*And the meaning of the little girl's name, "Sibonginkosi"? In English, "**We thank the Lord**"!*

Those administering the e'pap feeding and those witnessing the blessing of new health and vitality for many like Sibonginkosi are insistent that we pass on their heartfelt thanks to you.

Graham Shaw

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(Photos courtesy of Shelley Lasker)



Zimbabwe Victims' Support

