

"CORRUPTION FUELS HUNGER IN ZIMBABWE"

(Excerpts from *Los Angeles Times* article, 12/9/07)

- One-third of the population depends on foreign food aid, with rural poor the worst off.
- A new crisis looms.
- Lupane, Zimbabwe -- Jane Sibanda waits until the hunger claws her insides and she is so dizzy from lack of food that she can barely stand it. Then, ashamed, the 70-year-old forces herself to beg for food from other villagers, who themselves are close to starving.
- The national harvest plummeted. Production of maize fell by 74% from 1999 to 2004...
- At a home for orphans in the town of Nkayi, the children sleep on bare concrete floors without mattresses. The pantry had two moldy cabbages and a small bag of mealie meal ... not enough for a single meal for the 35 children. Yet locals say they have seen bags of maize stacked high in a local policeman's house.

ECONOMY WORSENS

Last July, when our Creekside Team was in Zimbabwe, the exchange rate was approximately \$200,000 Zim for \$1.00 US. The exchange rate today (only 4 ½ months later) is \$1.5-2.5 million Zim for \$1.00 US, depending on the latest news in the country. The country is in almost total collapse.

BULAWAYO ORPHAN PROGRAM UPDATE

In November we reported that several sources of food (mainly in South Africa) have been obtained for the 165 orphans we are trying to help in Bulawayo. However, the vehicle used by Themba Le'Ntandaneto, a Christian agency in Bulawayo, had burned out its motor and was being transported to South Africa for repair. The motor had to be replaced, and a number of other major repairs still have to be completed before the vehicle can be used.

The total cost of repairs now is estimated to be slightly over \$6,000 US. Creekside members and friends have raised almost half of the cost. As of last weekend the motor had been replaced, but a few final things needed to be done before the vehicle could be returned to Bulawayo. Allen Avery, a long-term missionary in Zimbabwe and South Africa, and his wife Janelle currently are in the United States on leave and are attempting to raise the remaining money to pay for the repairs.

Since food for the orphans has been obtained, we need the vehicle back in service as quickly as possible. If you would like to help, please write a check to Creekside Christian Fellowship and indicate in the memo section "Zim Orphan Program," and we will see that the money is forwarded for this purpose.

The 7th graders of Creekside Christian School asked if they might write to some of the orphans in Bulawayo. Janelle Avery sent information and photos of six orphan children. The Creekside students are preparing letters of encouragement to the orphans and simply letting them know that American children their own age are praying for them. The letters will be hand carried by Janelle to Africa, when she and her husband return in early January. Janelle is very excited about the support by our local Creekside School children.

NKULUMANE APPOINTS ELDERS AND DEACONS

On the first Sunday in December the Nkulumane (suburb of Bulawayo) congregation of Zimbabwe Christian Fellowship appointed their first elders and deacons. Emmanuel Mwale, pastor of the congregation, said that it was a time of great celebration. He thanked us for our prayers on behalf of the new leaders and the entire congregation. Creekside Christian Fellowship helped this church purchase their land and construct its present building. It is encouraging to hear of such remarkable, spiritual growth in the midst of such deprivation and turmoil.

ZIMBABWE 2008 SHORT-TERM MISSION TRIP

Plans are underway for a small group of Creekside leaders to visit Zimbabwe for about two weeks in late June or early July of 2008. The group will support the week long Church Leaders and Pastors Bible School Program in Gwandavale. In addition the team will review the orphans program in Bulawayo, as well as other local humanitarian efforts, to determine what more we can do to help. This will be a working trip with very little time for sight-seeing. If you might be interested in participating in the trip, please contact George Bragg, Larry Broughton, Steve Phillips or Mary Cliff for more information.

CONTINUE TO PRAY

Please keep the Christians in Zimbabwe in your prayers. Despite these exceptionally difficult times, they are growing in number and spirit. We can't even imagine the challenges and hardship they must face every day.

If you do not wish to receive these

updates, please send email to:
marycliff@cox.net .