

CARING FOR ORPHANS TOP PRIORITY

Last summer the Zimbabwe church leaders identified "caring for the local orphans" as one of their top priorities. With this in mind Creekside is working with African Outreach Ministries (AOM) and Themba Le'Ntandaneto in Bulawayo to help about 165 orphans in Bulawayo. Most of these children have lost their parents due to the devastating AIDs epidemic in Zimbabwe.

As much as possible, the orphan children have been placed with members of their family – aunts, uncles or grandparents -- to retain family identification and support. The most immediate need is for food for the children and, in some cases, the families taking care of them. Due to the current economic collapse of Zimbabwe, these families often do not have enough money for food and clothing for their own children, let alone several additional orphans. Even if money is available, an extreme shortage of food exists in the country.

With God's help and money from members of Creekside and other churches and individuals a great deal of progress has been made since October.

Cornelius Moyo, the director of the ministry of Themba Le'Ntandaneto, has been "sourcing" food for the orphans in Bulawayo and then distributing to the needy families. Recently, he found a Christian farmer in a rural area of Zimbabwe who sold him seven tons of maize, which will be ground into corn meal. He also located 44 gallons of cooking oil that he is storing in a safe location in Bulawayo. In addition, AOM was able to purchase over one ton of high protein chicken and beef flavored soy food in South Africa. Arrangements have been made for a Christian agency that provides food for elderly people in Zimbabwe to transport the soy products from South Africa to Bulawayo, as needed.

With these arrangements already in place, and hopefully, more to come, it is estimated that the basic foods will be supplied for the next 8-9 months. We praise God for meeting the needs of these children through so many Christians and organizations, working together.

MORE HELP NEEDED

Last month, the vehicle used to transport the food for the orphans blew it's engine, and it is not repairable, according to Themba Le'Ntandaneto's director Cornelius Moyo, who sources, stores and distributes the food for the orphans. AOM has made arrangements in South Africa for the engine to be replaced at a cost of roughly \$4,500 US, with the hopes that the money will

be raised. AOM's Allen and Janelle Avery are currently on leave in the US, raising money for various mission programs throughout southern Africa, including the replacement engine for the orphan project vehicle. So far, Creekside members have contributed \$1,250 toward the cost of this engine. Since the food for the orphans can't be sourced, stored and distributed without local transportation, **this need is urgent**. If you would like to help, please make your check payable to Creekside Christian Fellowship, and indicate "for Zim Orphans" in the memo section.

NEWS FROM LOCAL SOURCES

Economic Collapse: The currency is practically worthless, with an exchange rate of roughly \$1 US to \$1,000,000 Zim.

Food Shortage: The flow of money into Zimbabwe to relatives and friends has dropped dramatically because locally produced food and essentials are not available. Those who have the resources are making arrangements to have food hand delivered from neighboring countries.

Utilities: Electricity is available in major cities from 9:00 pm to midnight. Some city water supply systems are not functioning or not being properly treated, creating major health risks. Cars wait in lines for fuel for days. In the cities charcoal is being used for cooking.

Political Situation: The March 2008 elections have been rescheduled for June 2008, and the current government is brutally cracking down on any open opposition.

Please pray for a peaceful transition to a new government that can be supported by other African and Western nations to help save the country.

Rain: Following several years of draught conditions, it has started to rain in Zimbabwe. which is a great sign of encouragement for them. Hopefully, they will be blessed with a good wet rainy season.

Despite all the challenges, Zimbabwe Christians are growing in number and faith. The Nkulumane Church of Zimbabwe Christian Fellowship in Bulawayo is supporting a new mission work in neighboring Zambia. To be reaching out now with a strong mission program speaks volumes about the dedication and spiritual maturity of their leaders. Creekside significantly helped this congregation financially when it was constructing a new church building a few years ago. On Sunday November 25th the Nkulumane congregation will appoint its first elders and deacons, a major step in the maturity of the church.

Please pray for our fellow Christians in Zimbabwe, for the orphans we are attempting to help, and for our Zimbabwe Support Team as it plans for 2008 (more on those plans in the December issue).