

Be watchful, stand firm in the faith, act like men, be strong. Let all that you do be done in love.

I Corinthians 16: 13-14

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Your Impact in Zimbabwe: A Day at Gwayi River Mission

ZIMBABWE

Sibongile* straightened up from the stooped position she'd been in for most of the morning.

The 22-year-old widow was removing weeds from neat rows of vegetables.

Now her back and knees were stiff, and she needed a drink.

Every Thursday, Sibongile and a group of widows gather at the mission base in their village to help the mission by doing what they can.

Generally, they pull weeds that threaten the large vegetable garden which helps feed those in the village suffering from hunger - including most of the widows themselves.

Sibongile, like the other young widows present that morning, would be rewarded for her work with a desperately needed food parcel.

Sibongile made her way over to the water tap and turned the valve. Only a trickle of water tinkled into the cup she held beneath it.

Glancing at the heavily overcast sky, she knew why the water



Young widows volunteer at Gwayi River Mission.

wasn't flowing.

The water was pumped from the ground by a solar pump into two large tanks perched on a tower of scaffolding built for that purpose.

When someone opened the valve, as she had just done, the water should flow down through the open valve with gravity's help.

The borehole and the watering system were made possible by the gifts of ITMI supporters.

But when it was cloudy, like today, the solar pump had little power to pump the water up and into the overused water tank.

Outside the fence surrounding the mission base, a line was forming at



Cozmore and Laizah Fungulani minister in Gwayi River, Zimbabwe.

the other tap the mission had set up so that villagers and passersby were included in the blessing of clean water.

The weak stream of water wasn't filling the containers quickly, and a line of people coming to fill their containers with the water they'd need for the day was building up.

Living in rural Zimbabwe, Sibongile is no stranger to hard work. She labors from the break of dawn until the last light so that she and her family can eat.

Later, if there was enough water, she'd haul a bucket of water from the mission about a mile back to her own home, which she'd use to cook.

**Name changed for privacy*



These youth earned their very own copy of the Bible by volunteering at Gwayi River Mission.



The chicken coop at Gwayi River Mission Base, funded by ITMI supporters.



Widows receiving food parcels at Gwayi River Mission Base.



Gwayi River, Zimbabwe.

(continued from p.1)

She'd have to walk 3 miles to fill her container or do without if there wasn't enough water available.

Though the work was hard, Sibongile enjoyed the camaraderie she'd developed by coming to the mission each week to help with the garden and other chores that kept the mission operating.

She liked the feeling of knowing that her contribution was helping many others in the village. She enjoyed the sense of accomplishment she felt when she and the others finished removing weeds, and the rows of vegetables looked straight and neat.

Like the other widows, she had enjoyed being part of helping the little plants grow.

Cozmore, the man who had started the mission base and was in charge of it, walked by the tap where Sibongile waited for her cup to fill.

"Morning, Sibongile," he greeted her, gracing her with his customary wide and genuine smile.

"Morning," she returned, thinking about how much she admired and respected Cozmore and his wife, Laizah, and their work.

Cozmore always had a smile ready for the hurting in his village. But he was staunch in his commitment to care for widows and orphans.

He'd stood firm against some village young men, who, though they were able-bodied, despised Cozmore and his mission because they felt the help widows like Sibongile were getting should go to them.

Cozmore hadn't given in when powerful officials attempted to flex their political muscles to get Cozmore to use his mission's resources to endorse their political party and exclude certain political groups and tribes from the mission's help.

Instead, he had refused!

Later, Cozmore had told Sibongile and one or two others it was because there was only one message the mission would stand for, and that was the message of Jesus Christ, crucified and raised from the dead.

Those officials had threatened to beat Cozmore physically if he didn't change his mind before the elections took place. They believe that missions like Cozmore's are responsible for their party losing support in rural areas because they offer aid to the poor.

Sibongile fervently hoped Cozmore wouldn't be harmed.

When the police threatened Cozmore, the village was surprised when Cozmore didn't abandon his mission. He just kept proclaiming Jesus' story and

serving the orphans and widows.

Sibongile finished her water and returned the cup to its place. As Sibongile returned to where she'd left off pulling weeds, her eyes fell on the small building that housed the mill.

Several farmers were making their way to the mill with the fruit of their labor. Sibongile had never been to the mission when the mill wasn't being used. Each day saw farmers bringing crops to be milled.

The mill was one of the first things that had been built on the mission property.

Sibongile remembered Cozmore had built the structure around the mill, making it impossible to remove, to the angst of those who might desire to relieve the mission of it for their own benefit.

The mill at the mission base had made such an impact on the community.

Once people in her village could grow a crop and afford to have it milled - thanks to the mission's minuscule fee - more and more people started growing crops, and food had generally been more available.

That fee, though small, enabled the mission to help orphans and other widows like Sibongile.

Sibongile knew the mission also used the mill fees to provide food for older widows, who weren't required to earn points to exchange for the crucial provision.

Her eyes moved to a simple fledgling plot of grass and some decorative flowers that would hopefully provide a place of beauty for people in the community to enjoy.

Some of the youth in the community had come to clear stumps for the grass. Then another group of volunteers had planted the grass seeds by hand.

Next, her alert eyes moved to the chicken coop building, with its large windows covered with

(continued on p.6)

A Village Church in Need



Ruben teaches in his village church's old structure.



The rural village of Chongwe, Zambia.

ZAMBIA

For over a decade, **Ruben Mwale** was discipled by former ITMI partner, Timothy Keller. Tim visited Ruben's village frequently, and as the years went by, the Spirit grew Ruben into a spiritual leader in his village. He is the pastor of the church outside his village of Chongwe, Zambia. As he discipled others, and they grew into being able to share leadership responsibilities, Ruben has been able to travel regularly to Portuguese-speaking Mozambique to share Jesus there. Now, Ruben is being discipled by our partner, **Johan Leach**. He is participating in a Biblically-based course designed by Harvesters International to equip field pastors to make disciples and plant churches.

Like most who live in rural villages, these villagers have very little. Most survive by living off the land and few earn income.

For years, the church worshipped underneath tarps held up by poles. As Ruben led his church in putting their trust in the Lord to provide for all their needs, he was convicted that the church needed to honor the Lord by trusting Him to provide a place to worship that would declare by its very existence

that the Lord provides for His people.

In a place where even people's homes can't truly be considered "structures", if the church worships in a true structure, it would be a monument to His provision and Lordship.

With your support, ITMI was able to give Ruben some funds so that the church could purchase materials for making bricks. The church leaders themselves, including Ruben, did the labor of brick-making. This is highly unusual in an African church. It is common for church leaders to miss the Biblical teaching about servant leadership, and instead float along with cultural customs, where it is common for those in leadership to exalt themselves above those they lead.

But this church's leaders demonstrated something radically different and Christ-like by laying the bricks themselves.

Ruben and his church are trusting the Lord for \$4620 USD to complete the next step, which is 5 doors, a concrete floor and plaster for the interior walls.

We are praying for a few people who might want to be used by the Lord to demonstrate his faithfulness and build up His church in the Zambian village of Chongwe.

-Summer Kelley, Steve Evers



Onseepkans, South Africa is a rural farming town in the Northern Cape area.

SOUTH AFRICA

ITMI's Gerhard and Elmane le Roux and 5 of their 8 children minister in the Northern Cape area of South Africa.

The le Rouxs have established Onseepkans Mission, which has come to be a "city on the hill" in their community.

Many who live in this remote and mostly forgotten farming community have little income and live on meager government subsidies. Jobs are scarce, and infrastructure is primitive at best.

*Recently, ITMI was able to help the le Rouxs continue to reach their community for Christ through a **Project Joseph** outreach because of your generosity. Gerhard wrote this letter sharing how the Lord used your gifts.*

Dear Brothers and Sisters at ITMI,

In our town of Onseepkans, the local shops, mostly owned by foreigners, ask unaffordable high prices for their goods.

One specific area concerns the availability of bread and flour. The bread are sold at very high prices, up to R17 (17 South African Rand, which is about \$1.13 USD) per loaf.

Flour is now sold at R150 (\$10 USD) for a 22 lb. bag. Many of the local people buy the flour, since the bread is just too expensive to afford. Furthermore many times the bread are not of good quality.

When they buy the flour, they make bread cakes that they bake on the fire. They need to fetch firewood, and sometimes they have to walk long distances to find good firewood. This task is mostly performed by the elderly ladies in the household, typically fifty years or older. In winter it gets quite cold in the evenings, and to gather firewood in the cold is not a very pleasant task.

When ITMI Director, **Steve Evers**, informed me that they want to spread the Gospel by helping us with a **Project Joseph** outreach, we prayerfully considered how we should go about it. We came to the conclusion that the best way to help the people and make the best use of the money that was entrusted to us was to make it a special project through our small bakery.

Since ITMI provided the flour, we could now offer bread at a very special price. At \$1.13 a loaf, it made more sense for impoverished families in Onseepkans to buy an expensive bag of flour.

Now we could offer bread at less than half price. At that price, they



Collecting firewood is mostly performed by elderly women.

get more value for their money than by buying a bag of flour!

Apart from the people buying at our bakery, we identified individuals in the community who could sell the bread for us. Some of these individuals sell the bread and make a small percentage for their service, but one kind-hearted family sells the bread at cost. People from the community are overwhelmed by the discounted price. Some ask if there is something wrong with the bread!

We bought 80 bags of flour thus far, and still have the funds to buy 50 bags more.

Some positive outcomes of this outreach include:

One lady selling the bread for us in her community was able to buy a few dinner plates for her home from the little profit that she made.

One gentleman who regularly buys our bread now buys extra and distributes some to the needy people around him on his way home.

A Christian family who distribute the bread for free explain to the people that it is the goodness of the Lord.

A household who could scarcely feed their family on one loaf can now buy three loaves for nearly

(continued on p.6)

From the Director



DEAR TEAM: Standing Fast

Her name was Molly Hays. She was about 24 years old. The time was late June 1778, and the place was the Plains of Monmouth, New Jersey. The mid-summer heat was oppressive and sapped the soldiers' energy as if a giant, overbearing leech had attached itself to each of the fighting men. The battle between the British and the rag-tag American Colonists was intense, with casualties dropping with almost every beat of the cannons and artillery.

William Hays was committed to stand until the very last if that was what it took to win freedom from their oppressors. William is quoted as saying, "I'll not retreat...as long as there is another man on the field to fight." Molly happened to be William's young bride. With great determination, she declared, "...I can help the soldiers when they are in trouble, and I can stand it as well as he."

One by one, the hot, dehydrated, and, as reported, gasping soldiers began to drop from thirst and exhaustion. Molly grabbed an artillery bucket and shuttled cool water to as many of the troops as she could. For obvious reasons, she quickly became known not as Molly Hays but as Molly Pitcher.

When William was wounded and unable to continue to load his assigned cannon, Molly grabbed the rammer staff and began swabbing and reloading the gun. When it looked like the enemy was about to overtake the colonist's soldiers, Molly continually called out..."Stand fast." Finally, the battle turned to the will of the Colony army, and the British sounded the retreat. George Washington personally commended Molly for her commitment and tenacity, and it was said that eventually she was given the rank and title of Sergeant Molly.

It was once said that "Extreme and undesirable circumstances of situation can only be resolved by resorting to equally extreme actions." Most of us know the phrase, "...desperate times call for desperate measures." Well, today's world and all that is happening in vivid color before our eyes could easily fit the definition of "desperate times." We are needed now more than ever to bring the truth that God is ultimately in control and that He is working His plan, and best of all, He has laid out how the final chapter will be concluded. This hope we have is priceless in a world that has completely lost its way.

As you read this, **Johan Leach** and his team will be in the floodplains of Zambia, battling against the darkness that has covered these forgotten villages and people for generations. We have already drilled 22 boreholes (water wells) in the northwest corner of Zambia between the Zambezi River and Angola. These water wells have been incredible blessings to people groups that have never tasted clean water in their lifetimes. They have also opened the doors for Johan's specially trained lay evangelists and pastors to take the Gospel to each village in this area, ultimately spawning many fruitful church plants. This month, we will sink 8 new boreholes in settlements that had no water and no Gospel - until now. Johan and his team are expanding in all directions from their base in Chavuma, Zambia. Johan and the Harvesters mission team continue taking the previously uneducated believers and discipling them to become evangelists and church planters. Johan is "standing fast."



Adi and Ema Ban and their unique, biblically-based family relationship training within their Romanian communities has now exploded past the borders of Romania into more and more Romanian communities spread across Africa, Europe, and the USA. Adi and Ema are "standing fast."

ITMI could not do what we do to help these faithful nationals if we didn't have partners like you to "stand fast" with us. Now more than ever, this world needs faithful servants of God to do what it takes to stand fast and be mindful of what God is doing in our homes, churches, and world. Thank you for all you have done and what you are about to do. Blessings on you!

In His Service,

(continued from p.3)

chicken wire. The chickens were another new addition to the mission. Sibongile looked forward to when the chickens would produce eggs, which she knew would be included in the food supplies the mission provided for widows like herself.

Some of the chickens had been sold for meat, providing food for people and benefitting the mission's projects.

She knew some villagers were also coming to the mission to learn poultry farming, so meat and eggs would be available to many.

The chicken project was made possible through gifts from ITMI supporters.

Sibongile reached her row and stooped again to grasp a weed that was threatening a maize plant. She was thankful for Cozmore and the mission base that had brought Jesus and so many other good things to her village.

For widows like Sibongile who come to the mission to work and earn food supplies or Bibles, the Gwayi River Mission is a lifeline.

"What you need to know about women in this area," Cozmore says,

"is that they are treated like objects, required to follow their husbands' instructions."

Once widowed, Cozmore tells us, a woman is "as good as a slave." She's in danger of being used by others for their own agendas. Few are interested in helping a woman who is widowed. In desperation, some end up turning to prostitution.

Volunteering at Gwayi River allows these widows to feel the dignity of earning the basic necessities they need while contributing to the mission's cause.

"We give them hope with food supplies," Cozmore said, "They don't have to beg, and they [truly] value the supplies and Bibles we give them because they worked for it."

If the Lord is leading you to stand beside Cozmore and Laizah financially, please consider committing to a monthly donation to the ministry at Gwayi River.

Being able to rely on any amount coming in every month would help Cozmore plan outreaches and continue to demonstrate the Kingdom of God by ensuring widows and orphans do not get overlooked.

-Summer Kelley, Steve Evers

(continued from p.4)

the same price.

The shops that used to charge such high prices are now forced to reconsider their bread prices.

Many children come to our mission to ask for bread. They walk for nearly a kilometer. We are in a position to help them and in the process, we build relationships with them. We pray with them and thank the Lord for His provisions and also encourage them to be a blessing at home and to make sure that their lives are right with the Lord.

Thanks to ITMI's Project Joseph many children do not have to go hungry. More importantly, we can inform people about the goodness of the Lord and His love towards them.

- Gerhard, Elmane and Family

FOR PRAISE

1. South Africa - le Roux - Opportunity to reach their community with Christ through Project Joseph.
2. Ukraine - Nungesser - New believer who received Christ through Bread of Life food distribution in Ukraine!
3. Zimbabwe - van Wyk - Cozmore's faithfulness to demonstrate and declare the Good News.
4. South Sudan - Lazarus - Gang members joining sports outreach, studying the Bible and several have received Christ!

FOR PRAYER

1. Zimbabwe - van Wyk - Provision for the important outreaches at Gwayi River Mission Base.
2. Zambia - Mwale - Provision of renovation needs for Chongwe village church.
3. India - Kumar - Another module of training for rural believers on talking about Jesus with friends of Islamic faith completed and believers prepared for evangelistic ministry.
4. Zambia - ECA/Spring of Love - Both schools in need of godly instructors as classes resume this month.
5. Ukraine/Eastern Europe - Those hurting and in need because of Russian attack on Ukraine.



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