



Reaching and Serving the Persecuted Church

IN TOUCH MONTHLY

1 September 2008

What good is it, my brothers, if a man claims to have faith but has no deeds? Can such faith save him? Suppose a brother or sister is without clothes and daily food. If one of you says to him, “Go, I wish you well; keep warm and well fed,” but does nothing about his physical needs, what good is it? In the same way, faith by itself, if it is not accompanied by action, is dead. —James 2:14-17

Mercy Mission into Mugabeland

ZIMBABWE

[Editor’s Note: Because of the violence in Zimbabwe in recent months, we’re keeping the identities of a Zim family and our Project Partners undisclosed for personal safety reasons. JB]

A little over a month ago, a mercy mission was conducted by one of our **ITMI Project Partners** in Africa in order to bring food and money to a starving family in Zimbabwe. Once considered the “bread basket” of Africa because of its rich mineral deposits and fertile farming soil, Zimbabwe’s land lies fallow and unproductive under the terrorist regime of President Robert Mugabe.



Mugabe’s leadership method

Extreme poverty has replaced economic prosperity – and Death, decked out in Mugabe’s ZANU-PF regalia, rides like a madman on his pale horse destroying everything and everyone in its path.

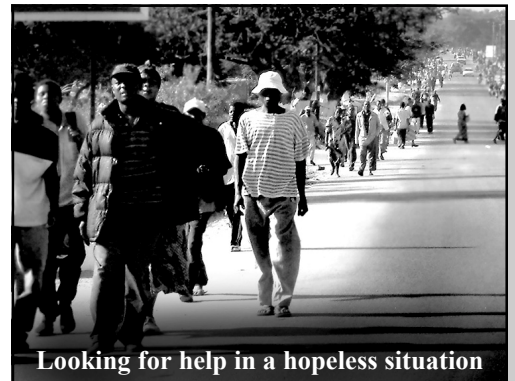
In May, we received an email from a Christian brother in Texas who had been sending monthly support directly to a family in Zim. With daily broadcasts of the escalating violence in Zim perpetrated by Mugabe’s cronies and the subsequent destabilization of the area by thousands flee-

ing into South Africa for protection (only to meet up with xenophobic violence), he and his family were genuinely concerned for this Zim family’s safety and welfare.

He found out that we had done work in Zim before and asked if we could safely make contact with this family to check on their plight. After a few initial emails between contacts proved that this might be a “do-able” operation, with no unnecessary risks being taken, our brother in Texas sent funds to us which we subsequently wired to our Project Partners in Africa. *We prayed, we watched, we waited.*

This was not the first time into the Zim interior in 2008. Earlier in the year, 2 prior mercy missions were conducted to bring food and supplies to a faithful Zim pastor who oversees 25 church outposts and a small group of orphans near his home. He struggles greatly in his work because most of the church members were crossing daily into the borders of neighboring countries searching for food – leaving no one left in the church to support his family.

On both of these earlier trips, our Partners witnessed the radical effects of Mugabe’s oppressive governmental policies: unemployed mobs, hyperinflation, low water supplies, no food or general merchandise, no over-the-counter or prescription drugs; empty shops, restaurants, hospitals, clinics; rampant malnutrition, starvation, disease and death.



Looking for help in a hopeless situation

It is no small wonder that according to a recent BBC Report, the average lifespan of a Zim male has fallen to 37 years old, with a female only reaching to age 34. That leaves over 1.3 million orphans in Zimbabwe – the same number as the population of San Antonio, Texas or 12 times the amount of orphans listed in one US survey.

For this 3rd mission a brief moment of opportunity opened up in June, but we were quickly notified that the situation had become extremely dangerous – with



Zim family helped by Project Partners

The rise of Islam caters to the baser instincts of fallen man

How far are we down the path of no return?

Few would dispute the assertion that American culture is seriously sex-saturated. Now there is rising concern that this weakness could be the key for Muslims to use in winning the West to Islam. It works like this: word gets around that Shi'ah Islam not only allows easy divorce but accommodates "temporary marriages" for a predetermined time period which may be for less than a day.

The procedure requires a dowry (or bride gift) from the man and the following spoken formula by the woman: "I marry myself to you for the specified dowry (mention the amount) and for the specified time period (mention the time period)." Then the man says, "I accept." This verbal exchange is an agreement between the two consenting parties and does not require a witness. Thus according to Shariah law they are legally 'married' and the dowry may be anything from a few bucks to a box of chocolates. The husband then deserts his "wife" without any obligations of support even in the event of a possible pregnancy.

Muslims are thus exploiting our secular humanistic sex-oriented culture for their own political ends.

WORLD magazine's Ed Veith notes, "This allows some pious Shiite men to have one-night stands, keep mistresses, and frequent prostitutes. Could Shi'ah Islam become the religion of choice for a sex-crazed culture?" Keep in mind that people today, in spite of rampant sinning, tend

to prefer religions of law, but they want a law that can justify them; one that is easy to perform and does not restrict their behavior. Veith continues, "It is not enough for many homosexuals to hear that they can find forgiveness for their sins in the Grace of God through Jesus Christ. Rather, homosexuals want to hear that they are **not sinners**, that **they do not need** forgiveness for what they do." [Emphasis mine] He concluded, "Our mega-churches may soon be competing with mega-mosques."

Western culture is becoming more confused by the day. US courts are arguing over what constitutes marriage and law-makers are contemplating a Constitutional change to fix the problem. Webster's Dictionary defines marriage as: "the social institution under which a man and woman establish their decision to live as husband and wife by legal commitments, religious ceremonies, etc."

God created man and woman, Adam and Eve (not Adam and Steve) and He ordained the first marriage. In His eyes marriage is one man and one woman, united for life – a definition that excludes any other interpretation.

There is no other word to uniquely express this divinely planned union. This has been accepted reality for over 5,000 years. Jesus Christ said, "*From the beginning of the creation, God 'made them male and female.' For this reason a man shall leave his father and mother and be joined to his wife and the two shall become one flesh.*" (Mark 10:6-8 NKJV)

Islam promotes polygamy. Muhammad had at least 16 wives that we know of plus two concubines. The Qur'an endorses multiple wives: "*Marry women of your choice, two, or three, or four; but if ye fear that ye shall not be able to deal justly with them, then only one, or any slave girls you may own.*" (Surah 4:3) The Caliphs that succeeded Muhammad all had multiple wives and his grandson, Hassan, married 70 women and had at least 31 children. According to Bukhari in the Hadith, "Muhammad sometimes had intimate relations with all of his wives in a single night."

**"Our mega-churches
may soon be
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mega-mosques."**

In my youth the word "gay" meant cheerful, having a merry time or a lively mood; colors that were bright or showy. It described someone who was gleeful, jovial or glad. Today the word has been hijacked by homosexuals and perverted to identify a life-style that is anything but jovial and glad. They apparently want to do the same with

"marriage." It is outrageous to pervert Biblical morals, but must our language be perverted too?

America began its descent into the post-Christian era when we removed prayer and Bible reading from our public schools 50 years ago. Next we removed the Ten Commandments from our schools, courthouses and public buildings, leaving the current and future generations without a moral compass to recognize right from wrong. Now the dispute over same-sex marriages confronts the courts. A victory for sodomites in this area will lead inevitably to polygamy and even more heated disputes over inheritance rights, social security benefits and assorted controversies.

If homosexuals want to be involved in what God identifies as an "abomination" that is their choice, but let them find a new word or phrase (like "civil union") to describe their chosen life-style. Those who pervert historic Biblical values should not be allowed to pervert our language as well by confusing the meaning of "marriage."

Bill Bathman – Cape Town, South Africa

Info sources:

WORLD magazine, July 26, 2008 p. 29. **Slavery, Terrorism & Islam**, [Revised and Expanded], Dr. Peter Hammond

September 2008

Dear Team,

Two weeks ago Harriett and I spent a late-Winter Sunday with our dear friends, **Gerhard** and **Elmane le Roux** at the **Moreson Children's Haven** in Malmesbury, north of Cape Town. I preached the morning message at the Mission assembly and we stayed on for a fellowship lunch with the entire Church family. The 'fellowship' lasted all afternoon as we shared testimonies of God's working in each of our lives and in His supplying our daily needs. MCH not only loves and cares for abandoned children, there is a rehab ministry at the Mission (a branch of KwaSizabantu) for drug addicts, prostitutes and other street people.



Your investment in this Project is yielding four-fold dividends.

This is the kind of ministry that Christians should and can do the best. Whenever the Church abdicates its Biblical role to husband the culture and welfare of the Nation by delegating that responsibility to secular government, problems will inevitably arise. Welfare spawns the concept of "entitlement" and leads to dependence on Big Brother instead of the Lord. God never intended the State to have that kind of impersonal obligation. We're way out of balance in America, but we should always be cautious of those who advocate *unspecified* "change."

Please pray for our US Marine grandson, Cpl. **Vincent Lemke**, who deployed to Iraq last month. He's been at Camp Pendleton in California undergoing extensive training for the past year.

Our grandson, **Christopher Hammond**, born with chronic kidney failure in 1995, celebrated his 13th Birthday last month! Until now, all of his medical care here in Cape Town has been at the Red Cross Children's Hospital, with transplants being done at the famous Groote Schuur Hospital (known for the world's first heart transplant in 1967). Consultations with two local hospital officials concerning his pending transplant have been a roller-coaster experience. Recent X-rays of the epiphysis of his wrist bones reveal continued growth potential. Since he is under the height and weight curve for his age, the specialists do not want to perform the transplant while he is experiencing a "growth-spurt" into his teens. "Why?" The anti-rejection medication (Prednisone) would retard his growth after a transplant. Thank you for continuing to pray with us that the transplant will take place in God's perfect timing for this special young man.

On Monday September 8th I will celebrate my 60th Spiritual Birthday. I was born-again on that memorable day in 1948 when, for the first time in my life of 20+ years, I heard the Gospel of Christ and His death on the Cross for my sins and received Him as my own personal Savior. (John 1:12) Life has been an awesome adventure since then.

Yours in His grip,

Bill Bathman

(Continued from page 1)

reports of food and groceries being confiscated at the border and individuals beaten to the point of near death. Another report was that the borders were being systematically shut down at certain key points by government personnel. It was apparent that the Zim people were being treated as prisoners in their own country for the upcoming one man (Mugabe) run-off election. The plan to go into Zim was wisely put on hold and a new plan was discussed between contacts to see if the family could make a safe escape to one of our Partner locations. *We continued to pray and wait on the Lord.*

Suddenly after days of waiting we received a one line email message from our Partners saying, **“Here is the family we met.”** Pictures were sent of the family, a broken-down church building where they gather for worship, and the funds they received from a gracious Christian family in the US.



Not enough Zim dollars to buy a loaf of bread

In a series of later messages we were told the full story: at the Zim border, the LORD protected our Partners in such a way that the Zimbabwean immigration and customs

officers were so preoccupied with everyone else’s belongings that their eyes were closed to the groceries, supplies and *camera* buried in our Partners’ bag.

Reaching the pre-arranged meeting point, a phone call was made. Within minutes, a gaunt middle-aged man met with our Partners for the first time and directed them to his home. The family gathered in the small living room and spoke in hushed tones of the intimidation tactics of Mugabe’s thugs, along with the horrible beatings and murders of suspected opposition party sympathizers.

But they also spoke about their hope in the Lord Jesus Christ. Our Partners stayed the night with this humble family and left the next day after distributing “gifts” and speaking words of encouragement to weary and frightened Christians.

In sharp contrast to our mercy mission, Zimbabwe’s revolutionary leader and President, Robert Mugabe, has failed to “deliver the goods” to his people or share the wealth of his country equally with all. He blames everyone but himself. Nor, through the years, has he been faithful in planting peace and prosperity in the fertile fields of Zim as a true leader under God would. Instead, Mugabe has sown hatred for 28 years – and reaped annual harvests of bloodshed and violence.

A liberation “savior” to his people no longer, Mugabe is clearly one of the many “false christs” that our Lord prophesied



Gift from Texas for food and supplies

would come in the last days. (Mark 13:22) Even in “Mugabeland” a tree is known by its fruit.

Only in the True Savior Jesus Christ is there lasting peace and prosperity for the people of Zim. The Word of God faithfully preached, wedded to loving acts of mercy and kindness toward our neighbors, are the very tools that He uses to shape nations into fruitful vines. This is what He prepared in advance for us to do – *and this is the type of work that is at the very heart of ITMI.*

We give thanks to God for those who risked their lives to bring a word of comfort to our suffering brethren in Zim as well as carrying in an armful of undeniable evidence of His super-abounding love.

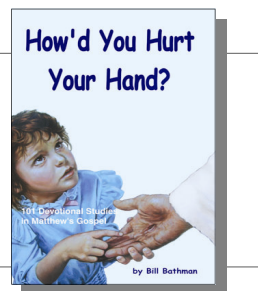
Pray for the peace of Zimbabwe!

Jeff Black - Tempe, AZ

How'd You Hurt Your Hand? by Bill Bathman

101 Bible studies in Matthew’s Gospel. This 205-page book by Bill celebrates ITMI’s 25th Anniversary. It is a current commentary considering the question, “What if Matthew took a look at us? Would he recognize 21st Century Christianity?” We are encouraged by the positive response to its launch. This is a great gift for someone you love.

\$10 + S&H
Discounts available for quantity purchases.



For Praise . . .

1. **Our Project Partners** who were kept safe and blessed in this mission to Zim!
2. **Steve & Darlene Evers** returned home safely from Eastern Europe trip!
3. **Bill & Harriett Bathman** are visiting loved ones & partners in the US!

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For Prayer . . .

1. **God’s leading and provision** as we continue to support our Zimbabwe brothers and sisters.
2. Bill and Harriett’s grandson, **Cpl. Vincent Lemke**, as he defends our country in Iraq.
3. **ITMI’s** needs as we seek to obey God in all areas that He has led us to in being His tools.

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