

Starfish Zimbabwe

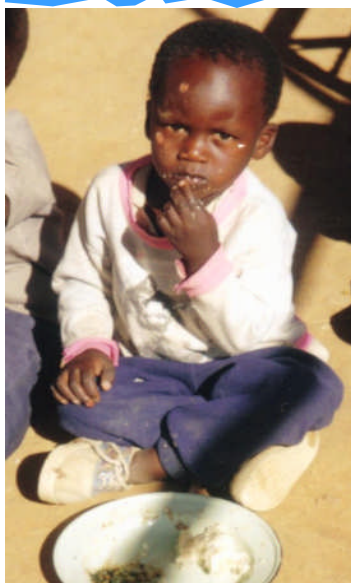
Volume 5 — #2 August 2009

THE MORE THINGS CHANGE THE MORE THEY STAY THE SAME

When the old man saw the young lad throwing starfish back into the sea he reminded him that he could not possibly make any difference because their was just too many of them. The lad threw another one back and said, "It will made a difference to that starfish."

*Adapted from
"The Star Thrower"*

By Elsey



Zimbabwe still is a beautiful country with "beautiful" people, however nothing stays the same. A number of changes have evolved over they last 1 to 2 years. Last year there was no food in the stores and now the shelves are full, Unemployment remains around 90% so having food in the stores does not help those who have no American dollars The official currency is no longer the Zimbabwean dollar, but the American dollar. The infrastructure of the country has deteriorated, with the roads getting worse, trash piled everywhere and electricity only available a few hours every day. Fuel for autos and trucks is also in short supply. Also, school fees are out of reach for most families. However in spite of all the adversities the spirit of the Christians in Zimbabwe remains high.

Alvaro and Debbie Dos Santos have just returned from Zimbabwe, where they visited the feeding center and supervised the distribution of the most recent shipping container. With them was Nolan Ashby from Oregon, Bobby Martin from Amarillo and Chuck Palmer from N. Carolina.. It was the desire of all concerned to have some independent observers go and bring back a report of the feeding operation and the distribution of the contents of the latest shipping container. In this report we will give you some of their remarks about the program. Alvaro and Debbie described their time in Zimbabwe as being most rewarding and fruitful. They were well received and encountered no problems with the governmental officials. There is no doubt that some mistakes have been made in the past and we are certainly not

immune from making more. However it is our intention that every aspect of the feeding program shall be completely transparent. We welcome constructive criticism, but most of all we covet your prayers that this work may go forward and more children and widows helped both physically and spiritually.

Operation Starfish Africa is our official name. We operate under the oversight of a committee composed of several members of the Hillcrest church of Christ in Abilene, Texas. We are in the process of registering in Zimbabwe as a charitable organization and plan to do the same here in the USA in the near future.

There is still estimated to be a million orphans in Zimbabwe as the result of AIDS. there are almost no medical supplies and food is available if you have the money.

In spite of all; of this God is still on his throne. Psalms 11

SHIPPING CONTAINER 2009

Our second shipping container was assembled in Portland Oregon by a group of Christians from several churches. There is no doubt that it was a work of love and praise. This was the second container we have sent. Each year we have wondered if we would be able to afford the shipping cost, but praise be to God each year the money has been there when it was needed. We should never doubt the power of our Living God.

The container, which

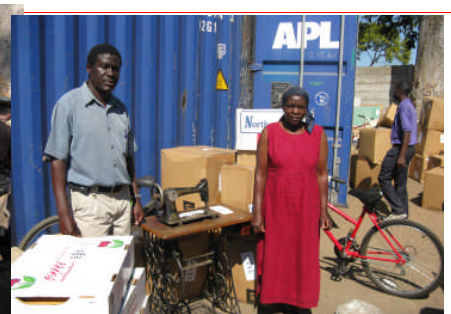
was packed to the roof and the closing door with such items as: Sewing machines, bicycles, cooking utensils, medical goods, bibles, bible class literature, drip irrigation systems, seeds, clothing, computers, wheel chairs, and medical equipment.

A team lead by Alvaro & Debbie Dos Santos went to Zimbabwe in late June and supervised the opening and distribution of the contents of the container. Not only did they give out goods the day it was opened but they also carried goods with them as they visited the villages where children are being fed. As fair a dis-

tribution as possible was accomplished. There were many, many “thank yous” and letters giving their appreciation of the work that was done.

Many congregations that do not have a feeding program have “applied” for assistance. The number is overwhelming, the need is so great.

Plans are underway for another shipping container in 2010. The site of origin has not been determined as yet. Please contact us if you have goods you wish to send.



Picture #1 Chris Dos Santos, Nolan Ashby, Chuck Palmer, Al Dos Santos a & Bobby Martin.

Picture #4—Passing out clothing at Clare Congregation/feeding center..

Picture #2—Cooking pots and crutches to be dispersed.at container site.

Picture #5—A member of a congregation being handed a pair of reading glasses after he successfully read from the bible.

Picture #3—Sewing machine, bicycle, medicines, & clothes donated to Lovemore and his wife..

Picture #6—Crippled lady at Mawae congregation/feeding center after she was given a wheelchair and clothing.

IT IS ALL ABOUT FEEDING ORPHANS



For nine years now we have been attempting to feed the orphans and widows of Zimbabwe in south Africa. Our records are not adequate enough to calculate the number of meals feed during that time, however with an average of 2000 meals a day it would be nearly 5 million. It started slow with the feeding only in one village and grew until there were nearly 35 feeding sites. At the present time we are only feeding a 10 sites, due to lack of funds. During this 9 years we have had various problems and learning experiences. Some were caused by our lack of

experience in doing the work, some brought on by inflation and scarcity of food and even some by failure of the local people to carry out their duties.

It is obvious even to the casual

observer that we are only reaching a small few of the total that need help. Our desire has always been and will continue to be, to do what we can on a daily basis and expand the program as we are able to do so. The entire operation is money driven, all of which comes from generous donors that have a love for children. However there other factors as; availability of food, adequate personnel to oversee the operation and willingness of the feeding centers to do their part of the program. The orphans would really appreciate your help.

SOME QUOTES FROM VARIOUS OBSERVERS

- "God's blessings have over flowed and that is what has allowed us to bring the food, medicine, and other things to the people of Zimbabwe . Keep up your good work and pray for Chris Dos Santos and Phillip that they are able to keep helping you feed those children and widows. They are a blessing to Starfish Ministries and a lot of work gets done because of their willingness and love for the people of Zimbabwe." Bobby Martin, Amarillo, Tx
- "Operation starfish is really needful and a very noble idea and I believe is achieving its intended mission in a nutshell and so I believe needs to continue as it is just timely and as needful ever." Shoarii Mbvumbi, Zimbabwe.
- "I am a part of those who witnessed the distribution (container of goods). All went very well. The program has helped many people who are really in need. Orphans, widows, widowers and those in need and even some who have, have benefited a lot." Clyde Tsiga, Minister Marondera Town church of Christ.
- "We had a very successful journey to Zimbabwe. 95% of the container was distributed directly to the people. We visited all ten feeding centers and quite a few of the old ones that we are no longer supporting. We took the goods with us on each journey and distributed directly to the people in the congregations at each place. We don't know what to say or where to start - the needs are even greater that we can say. The medicines were so welcome that many people cried to receive it. On our journey we were well received at all the places and well appreciated and we were asked by many 'please don't forget us. So we have a lot of work ahead.'" Al & Debbie Dos Santos

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WEB SITE:

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Operation Starfish is a program dedicated to the care of orphans and widows. In Zimbabwe there are over a million orphans as a result of the AIDS epidemic. These poor souls are the victims of some other person's sins. They need to be taught the word of God and to have warm food in their tummy. It is to these two problems we have addressed our outreach program. Our attitude is that we will feed one orphan or widow at a time and feed as many as we can find resources to do so. We strive diligently to use the money donated to feed their souls and bodies. At least once a year we send someone to monitor our efforts to insure that the money is being wisely spent. We solicit your prayers and your money for the growing effort. We welcome all questions and suggestions. We have a speaker that will come to your congregation and present the story.

SELF HELP PROGRAM

Because the situation in this time. It is our prayer that food source as well. They are Zimbabwe is so critical for the program will continue to encouraged to barter or sell any sustaining life, feeding has been grow and help more people. surplus that they encounter. our number one focus. However, As a means of encouraging self The picture below is an example it has become apparent that we help, we are asking each feeding of gardens that can be grown by must institute some measures center to attempt to grow its own the drip irrigation system that will help the people help vegetables by using the themselves. We do not want to drip irrigation system. We raise a generation of children have just sent 400 drip that think the world owes them units to be dispersed and a living. used. In some areas a We have stacks of papers water well may have to be requesting aide of various kinds dug in order to get the 10 and amounts and this does not gal. of water a day to feed reflect all the verbal request we the system. We also are get for help. The need is far encouraging the raising of beyond what we are able to do at chickens and goats as a



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