

Newsletter B. 08
Mutambara Mission Hospital
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Dear Brothers and Sisters in Christ,

Since our last letter to you earlier in the year, lots of water has passed under the bridge. We will try to put things down as we remember them and may not systematic.

A follow up to the feeding of the pregnant mothers, we have continued providing them the breakfast. However it is becoming increasingly difficult to continue as the inflation in Zimbabwe continues unabated. We still look forward to your assistance.

Below is a picture of the mothers feeding in hospital's Dining Hall.



Regarding the second borehole, we have succeeded in awarding contract to a Hydro-Engineering Company in Harare for sinking of the borehole and to put all mechanism in place to get water from it. The fund we had at hand was just enough. We agreed they would come for the job end May or first week of June. It is however unfortunate that they could not come as planned. Reason is that they run the risk of being accused that the borehole is politically motivated and being done by the opposition party in other to buy votes from the mission / hospital. They will prefer to keep off and come after the 'run off' election and after the accompanying 'dust' has settled.

We were in Nigeria late May for our son's (Ebuka's) graduation from Hillcrest High School and to get the children for vacation in Zimbabwe. One of the Awards Ebuka won was the Integrity award for the senior class. Osita won the physical fitness award while Anulika won the Highest GPA award (for maintaining GPA 4.0 for the year) among others. We feel honored and give thanks to God. If

all goes well, Ebuka will be in Calvin College, Grand Rapids, Michigan end of August.

We arrived amidst the confusion in the country resulting in the preparation for the run-off presidential election end of June. Brutal assaults of suspected opposition supporters became the order of the day nation-wide in suburbs and rural areas except in the cities. It however crept into the cities as the election drew closer. Mutambara Mission was not spared. On the second occasion it was attacked, we had just left for Harare an hour earlier. The Principal of the High School and family, the Primary School Principal were assaulted. The schools closed unceremoniously as the school hierarchy and students left for safety. Meanwhile the Church hierarchy of the Mutambara Mission warned that the Hospital stands to be closed if the security of staff and properties were not guaranteed. Being a District Hospital, the warning was heeded. But we have to say rather, that God provided us protection and peace since then as we claim his promises in **Psalm 91**.

The Eye unit is gradually becoming busy. We have had several cataract surgeries with lens implantations. Patients are happy and able to walk home without being led.

The Eye unit building extension of the Outpatient Department is gradually coming up. Since the political instability and attacks on people in the villages, work on it has been stalled. This is because people are living in fear and uncertainty. For us, we remain but ready to evacuate immediately if need be.



On a pathetic note, our high skilled Nurses are on the verge of leaving the hospital for greener pastures since the church and hospital management doesn't seem to have any solution to their economic problems.

The highest salary goes to the matron of the hospital. Take home for the month of June was Z\$180 billion or US\$12.00. The least paid are the unskilled workers. Take home was Z\$50 billion or US\$3.50. The salaries are paid into their bank accounts in Mutare (about 86km). These unskilled workers are yet to cash their checks. Reason, transport fare to go to Mutare costs Z\$60 billion round-trip then. There is no sense spending that amount to go withdraw Z\$50.00. A loaf of average sized bread cost 18 billion then. (Today as we write, the same size costs Z\$65.00 billion). That salary can only purchase 2 loaves of bread. And what can the balance of Z\$14.00 billion purchase? God knows. People of this cadre and most people don't have bread and tea in their breakfast menu anymore. Such is the plight of the poor and income earners in Zimbabwe.

We are concerned that the hospital will in no distant future lose it's skilled nurses to other Christian health institutions who are giving their workers cash incentives or "top up" in "hard currency" -- US\$ and Euro.

We want to do the same to save Mutambara Mission Hospital from falling back to its poor status of yesteryears. The question is how to get US\$ cash for the "top up" of the salaries of the workers in order to retain them? It may not necessarily be monthly; even bimonthly or quarterly for a start will be highly appreciated by the staff.

We thank God for protecting and guiding us.

Prayer points:

1. Peace and tranquility to return in Zimbabwe.
2. Improved economy in Zimbabwe.
3. For the quick recovery of all victims of political violence in Zimbabwe.
4. That God will give consolation to all who lost family members in this political violence.
5. For all that is necessary for our son's movement to Calvin College to fall in place at the right time, and for us to be able to accompany him to settle in school.
6. That God will provide solution the plight of the people of Zimbabwe especially the workers in Mutambara Mission Hospital.
7. For the safe return to Nigeria of Osita and Anulika end of July, for the new school year.

Emmanuel and Florence Mefor,
UMC Missionaries, Zimbabwe.