



Croydon - Zimbabwe Link October 2013

*Linking the Croydon Episcopal Area of the Diocese of Southwark
with the Diocese of Central Zimbabwe*

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NEWS FROM THE NATION

Elections - Peace but dubious justice

The general elections held at the end of July passed off remarkably quietly and the country has been peaceful since then. Official results were that Robert Mugabe won 61% of the vote while opposition leader Morgan Tsvangirai finished second with 34%. However there have been many allegations that the elections were far from fair. The electoral rolls were held back until the day before the election, thus avoiding proper scrutiny, but it was later discovered that there were an estimated one million invalid names including many deceased voters. It also excluded up to one million real ones, mostly in urban areas where MDC support is strongest. On the day of the elections, one of Zimbabwe's electoral commissioners, Mkhululi Nyathi, resigned, declining to detail his reasons but stating that they had to do with the way the elections were conducted. The Electoral Commission later reported that approximately 305,000 voters were turned away from the polls, with an additional 207,000 being 'assisted' on casting their ballots. (Information from Wikipedia: Zimbabwean general election 2013)

Bishop Ishmael has not commented directly on the elections, but remarks that since then:

'We are still trying to follow the direction of the new government. The country is relatively peaceful. Our hope is that peace will prevail, and I think it will. What we want now is to get people out of election mode and divert their attention towards development. What has happened has happened and we need to live and develop in the given environment.'

Food shortages predicted

Hunger is on the rise in Zimbabwe with an estimated 2.2 million people - one in four of the rural population - expected to need food assistance during the pre-harvest period early next year. This is the highest since early 2009 when more than half the population required food support. This estimate comes from a report from the Zimbabwe Vulnerability Assessment Committee, led by Government with support from the UN and other partners. The problem is attributed to adverse weather conditions, but also the unavailability and high cost of seed and fertilisers and projected high food prices due to the poor maize harvest. Grain prices are already 15% higher than this time last year. The UN World Food Programme is working with the Government to respond to the crisis. (Information from South Africa Foreign Policy Initiative website)

NEWS FROM THE DIOCESE OF CENTRAL ZIMBABWE

Bishop Ishmael reports:

Hospital progress

'There is steady progress. The whole of the western section of Phase 1 is roofed, including a portion of Phase 3, part of the Male ward. The builders are now working on the Labour and Pre-natal section, Phase 2, which the Mother's Union is helping to fund. This is a difficult and more expensive project as the area gets water-logged and needs reinforced footing. This part of the building needs to be roofed before Phase One can be completed and used.



The project is now raising a lot of interest with the Ministry of Health, with the District leadership recently asking for detailed information. It seems this could be the biggest single project in the whole of the Midlands Province. One might hope that they are thinking of helping to fund it, but the government does not have much money at present.

The clinic is doing well, though there is a major problem with the ambulance continuing to break down. It is off the road at the moment which makes life very difficult for Clinic staff, particularly when they need to refer patients to Gweru Provincial Hospital. The ambulance is 17 years old and taking into account the St Patrick's Road, it has served us very well.'

Harben Park Horticulture

'The plot is doing well and producing vegetables including onions, tomatoes, (pictured below) and potatoes. One of our local companies has put up a board to advertise their seed. They do not pay us but we get seed from them at a discount. The drip irrigation company is also using our plot to advertise their equipment. We hope that next time we buy from them we will get a discount. Our plot attracts many people who come and visit, but not all of them are good. A month ago our pump was stolen, but we have since replaced it. It was a major drawback though. We are now preparing the land for summer potatoes. The soil is good for this crop.'



Rural Rectories

'This has been a major success as nine rectories have now been completed. The two rectories pictured: St Cyprian Zhombe and St David's Dorset have now been dedicated and the next will be St Andrews's Gangarabwe Chiwundura on 9th November.'



Diocesan Anniversary

'We celebrated the 32nd Anniversary of our Diocese on Saturday 5th October and were delighted that we raised over \$113,000 for our projects, fairly good considering that most people are out of work. Sometimes I do not understand how people in our Diocese can be so generous taking into account the difficulties they face. And they do it with so much joy and excitement. We have a great God.'*

(*Len Abrams comments: The UN Data website gives the average income per capita per year in Zimbabwe as \$679 as compared with \$39,308 in the UK. On this basis, the equivalent fundraising for a Diocese in the UK would be over £4 million! We have a lot to learn!)

NEWS FROM THE LINK

Parish to Parish Links

Our Link Committee has been focussing on parish to parish links recently and thinking about ways that we can support and encourage these. We realise the importance of building relationships and learning from each other to help us to walk together in prayer and fellowship. We therefore hope that as many people as possible can attend the following meeting:

Thursday 7th November 7.30-9.30pm

PARISH LINKS MEETING

St Andrews, Coulsdon

Bishop Jonathan will be giving some reflections on his visit to Central Zimbabwe earlier this year and the significance of parish-to-parish links. Plus an update on news from Central Zimbabwe, a chance to share our experience of parish links and explore together ways that these can be strengthened and developed.

Please display the attached flyer in your church and pass this invitation on to any others you think might be interested. It would help with catering and practical arrangements, if you could give us some indication of possible attendance. Contact Ann Wright on wright@btinternet.com for more info or to let us know if you can come.

POINTERS FOR PRAYER

- For local government to get behind the St Patrick's hospital project
- For continued success at Harben Park and protection from theft
- For funds raised at the Diocesan Anniversary to be the basis of great new things
- For new initiatives and new wisdom in developing parish to parish links

To contact us:

On general matters contact Ann Wright on wright@btinternet.com

On education matters contact Trudy Baker on andyandtrudy@blueyonder.co.uk

To delete or add a name to our e-news database, please contact croydon.zim.link@btinternet.com