

## HOME OF PEACE

### SHELTER OF THE DESTITUTE AND HOMELESS IN THE CITY OF BULAWAYO IN ZIMBABWE

#### BACKGROUND

Zimbabwe then Rhodesia was a British colony up to 1980 when the country attained its independence through a painful war of liberation. Soon after independence in November 1980 there were skirmishes at demobilization Assembly Points between ex-ZANLA and ex-ZIPRA combatants the armed wings of the ZANU-PF and PF-ZAPU political parties respectively at Entumbane suburb of the city of Bulawayo in Matabeleland where soldiers from the two guerilla fighters were housed in close proximity. A second and more serious outbreak of violence occurred at the same place in February 1981, spreading to parts of the Midlands and leading to more than 300 deaths. After this fighting there was a rising wave of desertions by ex-ZIPRA members of the National Army, who felt threatened and overlooked within the new integrated army. The desertions grew after February 1982, when government discovered arms caches on PF-ZAPU properties and accused PF-ZAPU of planning to overthrow the government by force. This resulted in the arrest on treason charges of ex-ZIPRA military leadership and the expulsion of PF-ZAPU from the government of national unity. Immediately the government used Emergency Powers to impose curfews, set up road blocks, conduct house to house searches and carry out other security operations in Matabeleland. These activities escalated as banditry and dissident attacks increased. In 1983 the government deployed a military brigade and other intelligence units in Matabeleland North. Within weeks there were reports of numerous atrocities by the army and these intelligence units. This violence against the people and political harassment continued until the signing of the Unity Accord between ZANU-PF and PF-ZAPU in December, 1987. This violence left an estimated number of more than 20 thousand people dead, thousands missing, many homesteads destroyed and many other ills against humanity were also reported. Many people fled the violence in the rural areas to seek refuge in the city of Bulawayo and at the same time many industrial businesses in this town shut down because of the uncertainty of political stability and uncertain economic future. Bulawayo the industrial hub of Zimbabwe at the time suffered a heavy setback in industrial activity increasing the number of the homeless and unemployed. The homeless and destitute which included children, created by Zimbabwean political instability, scavenged through rubbish bins for food and at night they huddled under cover of cardboard on the pavement of the Railway station.

In 1987, a catholic couple, Ben and Joan Strydom, touched by the plight of these destitute and homeless started a feeding program. Ben immediately resigned from his employment with the National Railways of Zimbabwe where he had been employed as an Internal Auditor. Every day Mrs Strydom made soup in large quantities and they also bought some bread and took it to the Railway station and fed the homeless. Their efforts were soon joined by Rev Joseph Chikwangura who is now aged 84, one of the first group of permanent deacons to be ordained in Zimbabwe in 1979 and still rides his bicycle for transport and does not use public transport. At the time Joseph Chikwangura had a civil job as a carpenter of which he was retired in the year 2000 and joined Home of Peace on a permanent basis.

The work done by Ben and Joan also attracted other people of goodwill including members of the Anglican Church and the Methodist Church. The group named itself 'The Combined Churches

Mobile Soup Kitchen' and worked under the supervision of Ben and Joan. The Combined Churches Mobile Soup Kitchen also provided blankets, clothing and medical care on the streets. The Combined Churches Mobile Soup Kitchen realized that the feeding project did not fully address the needs of the destitute and homeless. People needed a home and for their children to go to school and to live normal lives which they could not have in the streets. In 1998 encouraged and supported by Fr Martin Schupp (CMM) and endorsed by Archbishop Henry Karlen (CMM), the Combined Churches Mobile Soup Kitchen applied to the City of Bulawayo and was given a piece of land in the suburb of Thorngrove where they could build a shelter for the destitute homeless. Work on the site started immediately and the construction of a home with a capacity of 200 people and a projects centre to offer training to those taken into the home in professional skills was completed and officially opened on 18<sup>th</sup> August, 2001. This project was realized with the assistance of the following;

City of Bulawayo	- Land
Archbishop Henry Karlen. (CMM) Archdiocese of Bulawayo	- Fiance
Fr Martin Schupp (CMM)	- Finance, Grinding meal and lathe machines, drills and other workshop machinery.
Fr Christop Eisentraut (CMM) Archdiocese of Bulawayo	- Finance
Fr Wolfgang Pucher – Austria	- Finance
Caritas – Austria	- Finance
Dr Anton Stadler – Austria	- Finance
Alfred Stingl – Austria	- Finance
Anglo American Corporation	- Finance
Franciscan Missionaries of the Divine Motherhood	- Finance
E A Mlilo – Bulawayo	- Finance
Ben and Joan Strydom – Bulawayo	- Finance
Rev Joseph Chikwangura	- Roofing
And others not mentioned here.	

The Combined Churches Mobile Kitchen was registered as “HOME OF PEACE” a private voluntary organization. The Anglican and Methodist Churches ceased their participation when the feeding of people at the Railway Station stopped and the people where moved to the new home. Home of Peace has, since its establishment, been managed by catholic individuals. Home of Peace is under a Board of Trusteeship comprising of;

- The Archbishop of the Archdiocese of Bulawayo
- Mr. David Coltart – Lawyer
- Mr. Esats – Schools Uniforms Merchant

However Archbishop Alex Thomas has advised that they have not met since his ordination.

The home also has an administration committee comprised of;

Chairperson/Director	: Mr. Clive Krienke
Assistant Director/Handyman	: Rev Joseph Chikwangura (Perm Deacon)
Vice Chairperson	: Rev Hendrick Vermaak (Perm Deacon)
Committee member	: Mr. Thomas Moyo

Committee member	: Mr. Anton Jacobs
Committee member	: Mrs. Dense Pedda
Committee member	: Mrs. Grace Vermaak

Clive Krienke and Rev Joseph Chikwangura are the officials on the ground running the home on a daily basis.

While the Home of Peace is still referred to as Combined Churches Mobile Soup Kitchen and is said to be a non-denominational organization, the above management members except Mr Esats are catholics and has been built by catholics.

All this was because of a catholic couple who practiced a living faith to the end of their days. Joan died in 2011 and Ben 2 years later.

#### AIMS AND OBJECTIVES OF HOME OF PEACE

The aims and objectives of Home of Peace is to reveal the face of our loving God to humanity; to restore the dignity of the person of the less fortunate; to save lives and give hope to the hopeless; to provide a home to the homeless and destitute, to give food and clothing, bedding, health facilities to the destitute and homeless and to educate their children as set by Isaiah 58:6-7 and affirmed in Mt 25:35-41.

#### FINANCE

Initially donations were US\$60 000.00 per annum. As the Zimbabwean economy continued to decline resulting in a total collapse, the donations also declined to an inadequate amount of US\$20 000.00 per annum at times less and even the share from the Diocesan Lenten collection was stopped.

#### CHALLENGES

The home has 80 residents out of a previous 100. Some have died. The youngest is 2 years old and the oldest is a female aged 85. There are 30 are women, 25 men and 25 children. Twelve of the children go to school, 6 at primary and 6 at secondary.

The home provides;

- food to these people every day.
- health service. Many of them are HIV positive.
- pay school fees 3 terms per annum for the 12 school going children
- pay rates and taxes
- blankets and clothing
- insurance, license, servicing and fuel of the home's motor vehicle
- subsistence allowance to Deacon Joseph Chikwangura which he has not paid since April 2016.

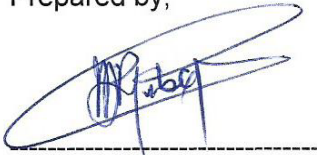
- the Director's subsistence allowance as above.  
The home owes Tee's Pharmacy US\$2000 for medicines.

The only two solar geysers have broken down and the residents have no hot water.  
The grinding mill for grinding maize into maize meal was stolen and needs to be replaced.  
The home used to make wooden crosses for sale which brought in a little income. The self help project collapsed as the machinists later demanded artisan salaries which the home could not afford, and the matter ended at the Labour Court.  
All the dining hall chairs were stolen and there is no funding to buy new chairs.  
The Home also raised chickens, rabbits and turkeys as an income generating project and one day all were stolen and the project cannot be restarted.

It is becoming increasingly difficult to support the destitute residents that the Home of Peace is sheltering. The home is faced with imminent closure and it is very painful to think of what will happen to the residents should this happen. They will again relive the horrors of the past. God help us.

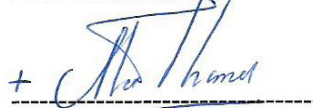
Pictures of the director of the home Clive Kienke, Rev Joseph Chikwangura, parts of Home of Peace and some of the residents are on the pages below.

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ENDORSEMENT



Alex Thomas  
Archbishop of Bulawayo  
ZIMBABWE







Clive Krienke



Rev Joseph Chikwangura









