

May 4th 2005

Dear Nhimbe Friends,

Again, I write with inspiration to thank you for your help. This is a long and winding road and you are the wind behind us. Someone told me the other day that we take two steps forward and one back and that is the normal way here. I can certainly ascertain that I have had plenty of backward (and awkward) steps in this learning and do relate to the idea. I have decided that since that is the case, then I will take it on as a dance and continue to dream up beautiful music in the background. There must be some important creative blend of evolution being revealed, and holding the Light can only enhance the dance.

Let me take a minute and de-fuse. I have had an incredibly contrasting week. The situation here is a disturbingly odd blend between frustration for things hoped for and appreciation of the simplicity of what is, dreams for a future unrealized while coming to grips with surviving day to day, and microcosmic efforts by all concerned to regain some sense of balance in the relative world of dignity, compassion and joy and really wanting the bad part of the dream to be over.

As only a temporary participant on this soil I keep trying to understand all of the complexities involved and regularly fall short. I do know that my heart is bound with love for my fellow human, no matter what their predisposition or background, and no matter how they may or may not fit my desire, belief or concept for a fair world. There are people stealing from other people and other personal violence at all levels of society just like everywhere in the world. There are people wanting to extend help to those in need with all the sincerity imaginable as well.

It seems to me that the biggest problem is that one hurt and wrongdoing begets more of the same, so that lack of opportunity, disempowerment, and injustice becomes a cycle, which no human interceding will fix. It is not about one person or another. It is not about suffering. It is about the blend of our interrelationships with each other, our selves and our earth beneath us. What will create change is a new vision for all concerned. Starting over is my motto at this point, and the children are our hope, everywhere. I can stay focused on that.

SOLAR ENERGY

After 5 years, we have finally installed a small (40 watt) solar collector at the Community Center! This is a grand achievement, after visioning the potential for so long. At home in Oregon, we have had a solar hot water heater since the mid-80's, and 2 solar panels in the queue to be installed for electricity - solar has always been a part of my personal philosophy. Then when Dana Vion and Molly Sirois were here at the beginning of 2004 to film the documentary and they used a solar panel to charge their video equipment, I knew things would have to shift soon for Nhimbe.

Now, this year, Ed Miller of Impac in Salem, Oregon, inspired this great stride forward. Not only did he donate a Vibracussor (chiropractic device for use in NMT - see www.nmt.md) to Circle of Well Being, my practice in the states, but also did the research to be able to donate all the “fixings” so that I came equipped right up to the battery. This meant that all we needed to buy was from the battery up to the roof. We located the best products for the job, and took the installer out to Mhondoro for a couple of days in the country while he wired us up. It was made so easy...and that is how new things get done...being made easy.

This is so incredible because not only can I use the Vibracussor in the Donhodzo Center (a place to cool down, settle in and heal) located in the Resource Building at the Community Center, but I can also plug in the laptop and a light so have a way to charge up and write while in the rural area. In the past, I have had to write or deal with records in town only, while simultaneously trying to accomplish many other things.

Additionally, the Resource Building contains the library in one room and a meeting room in another allowing for evening meetings, and a room where the tutor and preschool children come, as well as the Donhodzo room. The preschool children are supposed to be listening to a national radio program for preschools once a week but have a hard time keeping batteries, so this will solve their problem as long as we can create an adaptor for their radio. With one effort, all four rooms will benefit. Thanks Ed – your simple heart felt gesture has made a big impact!

HEALTH AND HEALING

Alternative healing modalities offer many things to the health crisis here. Besides offering NMT and other forms of treatments, we are looking at many approaches to bring the best and simplest help here. Locally in Harare there are many people taking far more interest in health than ever in the past. There are many resources becoming available for offering more in the way of education about traditional, and non-traditional but locally available herbs and plants, which have been used for healing purposes for centuries. It seems that what is cropping up is more individual approaches instead of NGOs being around to offer assistance. Now the effort is to network with all involved to find solutions.

The largest concern I have at this point is education regarding health. Each person that I treat in any way starts with a standard in-take but additionally includes many questions about their knowledge base. How much water is a person drinking? Do they know not to handle chemicals (insecticide for ants and rat poison are used by every family I know) with bare hands and to use protective gear to not inhale them? Do they know not to burn plastics? My list is long. I am horrified that 100% of the people in the rural area that I have worked with do not understand the importance of any of these things. They really have no idea. It is an offense against humanity to create products that can be deadly without educating about their use. This is undoubtedly one of the main reasons people are falling ill. Malnutrition is obviously a problem but poisoning is affecting those who get enough to eat as well.

The water treatment I mentioned in the first Field Report has made it to the second stage of working with larger quantities of water successfully. They are now taking the next step by taking it to the laboratories for exact analysis. I will keep you posted as this could have a major effect on anyone going to or living in the city.

I heard about another method that was happened upon in India and that was storing water in brass pots and within a short time, the water was purified. This was verified and attributed to the copper in the brass. Can we buy brass pots in Zimbabwe? They do use some copper in bracelets, for instance, but I don't know about brass.

We are also looking into the use of sound in healing as well. I know that we all have had personal experiences with sounds having a profound effect on our attitude and health – it is right up there with humor and laughter. Working with that idea, our plan here is to teach a song which has been “brought through” with the sole purpose of healing in mind, specifically HIV. It was a combination effort initially between two people whose heart was great for the healing of those with HIV/AIDs.

A third person involved is one of the original singers from when the song was recorded on CD in full ensemble. She is making it possible to go to Mhondoro and teach the lyrics to the interested residents. This song is currently played in various public places and has a catchy tune. When I return next time, we may be able to offer some simple marimba arrangement to accompany it so that the music can spread to the instruments. Our villages will become a test site of sorts for how this song can stimulate health. It is impossible to do a scientific double blind study or the like. With little time and resources we are approaching this as simply as possible. Obviously, this is all experimental but it feels that it is worth the effort. Simple, self-empowering ideas are right in alignment with Nhimbe!

ECONOMY

Now with the numbers in the millions with little effort, we are hiring someone to act as our bookkeeper in town that will work with our manager in Mhondoro. This is a profound step for us to take and much needed. It was just over a year ago we arrived near Christmas time and there were these new bills of 1,5,10 and 20 thousands, and the coins were lying in the dirt. Nothing has changed with that other than there are more in circulation and one sees no coins. Some of these still read that they are bank notes to expire on or before December 2004, but they are still passed.

We hear stories about the street rate over 16,000 and still climbing while the bank rate is 6,200 to 1 USD. I just know that when we spend millions of dollars in a very short time, I have to hold on to my sense of reality. I know there are people in the world who are used to it, and my prosperity consciousness tells me it's a good idea to accept it as normal, after all I don't want to have beliefs which limit the flow.

However, it does keep reminding me of the Monopoly game I played as a child. I really loved the game and got very good at it. Then somewhere along the line I started feeling badly because I would end up with all of the land and have too much power over those

stopping on my property, resulting in them owing me endlessly. Sometimes I would even try to make up new rules just so that my opponents did not have give up and go down in defeat. Even then, the distribution of wealth bothered me, but I still loved to play the game. Early on, I “got” the principle that one has to have money to make money, and that has stayed with me for a long time.

Now I realize that you may be wondering what my childhood ponderings have to do with all of this. It is primarily therapeutic. I have to keep trying to wrap my brain around daily life to function. It is not as if I am on a vacation holiday and can just relax about spending millions on whatever comes up. I cannot just give money to my family or a friend, no matter how great the need. I am limited by my purpose here and continue to grapple with it. Everything I’m encountering takes me back to that game with some of the same dynamics. There are bills that look absurdly large (considering that our US\$ only reaches 100), while trying to come to grips with the wealth distribution around the world, and hoping to be fortunate enough to have a stash of angel cards that get one out of trouble or go past Go and get extra help.

Our first meeting with our bookkeeper has gone well. It is clearly the right direction to be headed and gives Cosmas and I the sleep we deserve! This, in combination with a new manager in Mhondoro, is leading us towards having a better foundation for dealing with the continued travesty of inflation. I used to have such a struggle with too many things that were feeling out of my control and I would stress over it – I couldn’t get the information I needed in a timely way, and kept feeling the psychic pull of the 1,200 villagers yanking my chord, coupled with a deep desire to do everything “right”. Then I realized that everything *was* out of control, and that is the nature of the beast. So somewhere along the way, I adapted to nature. I can live with everything being out of control. I can live with everyone pulling on my mind and heart. I can live with trying to do it all right while still accepting our growing pains. Less resistance is certainly more power to be effective.

Just to give you an idea of the prices recently:

1 dozen eggs – 19,000

garlic – 47,000 per kg.

16 oz good wine vinegar 5,800 (this must be an old price)

16 oz olive oil (real not blended) 132,000

1 cucumber 8,000

1 gr pepper 3,000

1 banana 1,000

1 orange 1,000

1 apple 4,000

1 cabbage 10,000

beef 35-60,000 per kg in town

beef 25,000 per kg in Mhondoro

We could not find sugar for days. We finally found a store with pallets of it but they had just been bought up. So, we really do not have sugar for making the preschool bread or

mahewu. We are borrowing some from Cosmos's store. He happened to have some brownish sugar that he could not sell before because people really get used to the white. So that is a temporary solution until we can locate a supply. Part of locating supplies is needing to be just devoted to that task and not trying to accomplish many other things.

The petrol is again unavailable this time. The queues are going around city blocks, and so much time is spent just trying to locate petrol. Its running about 4,400 per liter. The family knows people to ask and so we have ideas where to wait and when, which helps immensely, but they really do not know for sure until it happens. So, in the morning, we might hear that we do not know where we will find petrol today but by evening, have been successful.

Another shortage has been in candles and matches, of all things. We went everywhere in Harare and could not find any. Finally, we found them in the rural area where they had not heard rumors to stockpile and not sell, I guess. Not only do we need them in the rural area, but in town too, as the electricity goes off on regular intervals, (often while preparing dinner) so candles and matches are basic staples.

Thank you for all you do to make Nhimbe what it is. I need to close this letter and leave for Mhondoro. We are going to pay school fees for our 210 kids. This takes us to 5 schools. On Friday we'll have our large community gathering where everyone comes to get the latest on Nhimbe. Then Saturday will be the singing lesson. We'll be back in town next week.

The journey forward requires that we all see where we are going without necessarily knowing exactly how we will get there. Cosmas and I are very grateful for your confidence in us to carry on. Thanks, and thanks from those in Mhondoro!

Blessings,

Jaiaen