

Last Field Report from Jaiaen. We are happy she made it safely back from Zimbabwe. Thank you for your support. Anita Yap

May 20th, 2005

Hello Nhimbe Friends –

Greetings from Zimbabwe! I will be home by the time you receive this and want to thank you for your help in making this journey another very successful and power-packed 6 weeks. Those of you at home, both personally keeping the home fires burning and in business holding it all together are an incredible load-bearing part of the Nhimbe structure – I could not do this without you! Combining your energy with the financial support and encouragement from others makes this carpet fly! Again, *tatenda chiezvo!*

HELP FROM THE FOUR DIRECTIONS

Spirit is helping Nhimbe in some new and ever changing ways, for which we continue in gratitude and appreciation. This trip has opened up support from other non-Shona Zimbabweans with roots in England, Europe, Arabia, New Zealand and a minute island (which I can't remember the name). Most of these people are 3rd-plus-generation Zimbabweans, much like me on American soil, with great-grandparents coming from Ireland. Do I consider myself American or Irish? Actually, I hope that I am a Human Being firstly, with inclinations, tendencies and patterning from the Celts, secondly, but yes, over all, I am an American, as they are Zimbabweans.

The effects of these new connections are profound, not only from the standpoint of other people holding Nhimbe in the Light, and adding energy which keeps the wheel moving through the oftentimes thick mud, but also then, more doors can open through others on Zimbabwean soil. Up until this trip, we have been primarily working alone here. This expansion is a much-welcomed extension of God's help for our project in excellent timing. I am deeply moved by the interest, friendship and compassionate sensitivity of these people and do look forward to the continued synergy.

NUTRITION GARDEN FOR SCHOOLS

Last September, as I was leaving from the Harare airport, I met John Stevens of Stevens Safaris in the airport. He shared his story about being a photographic safari guide and beginning a project for the school that was in the immediate area of their safari camp, in the Omay Communal Lands. Those going on his safaris were not only introduced to the incredible wildlife in the Zimbabwean bush and John's large love of nature, but also to the local indigenous community through the young lives of the children at this remote primary school. Being touched by these experiences, tourists began donating funds for which John and his wife, Nicci, set up a trust. Since 1997, they have been helping this community school set up a permaculture project with water availability being at a

premium in that part of the country. Nicci has been administering this project almost single-handedly and has been working against the very same odds as Nhimbe. John and Nicci both have a deep concern for these people and particularly in seeing that the children have enough to eat.

Ancient Ways will be looking into the possibility of helping the Stevens with this project. Not only does it match our mission, but also through their efforts they have broken the ground in understanding the challenges, both physical and cultural, of this region, and have laid a foundation for a model program, which can be expanded to other schools. I am convinced that meeting John was more of a divine appointment than an accidental meeting. It is through this connection that we have also finally met our permaculture development trainer.

PERMACULTURE IN MHONDORO

After 5 years of waiting, the door opened - I was by chance stopping in to see Nicci and her permaculture expert from the Omay project just happened to stop by in the same hour. Its been tremendously difficult to keep normal meetings on time so to have a meeting set up for me by Spirit with no effort on my part was such a blessing and direct from heaven. Nicci has been working with Tayero (sorry but I misplaced his last name) as a hands-on permaculture advisor since the beginning of their project.

We are making plans to bring Tayero out to our Nhimbe Community Center. He visited on one of my last days in Mhondoro to see what we already had established. Our plan is that he will begin by meeting with core Nhimbe people to map the stand, and develop a proposal for further planting and working of the land there. There is great potential for additional orchard, gardening, and tree growing (indigenous re-sprouting types) for firewood. Additionally we would have him spend multiple days with core staff in the morning and then four villagers from each village in the afternoon to teach basic permaculture techniques. One goal is to share permaculture from a Shona person's point of view so that they realize that there are other options to chemicals. Everyone is excited about this new opportunity!

NHIMBE ACCOUNTING & INFLATION

Another wonderful gift from meeting Nicci was her recommendation of someone to help with our books, as she completely understood what we needed. Not only did we need someone to deal with all these extra zeros since we are handling millions daily, but also someone with a genuine affection and concern for people, since that is the heart of Nhimbe. We found ourselves a gem and now have a new accounting process and system that is being developed to deal with the record keeping of spiraling inflation.

It was just last year that our finances entirely left the level of manageability that a normal background as my own could handle. I have mentioned before that the bank rate when we began Nhimbe was 38 and we saw that the street rate was

42; this was March of 2000. Now in May the bank rate is 6,200 with stories that it may be raised, maybe doubled, soon. Rumors are that the street rate is 20-something-thousand to one USD.

That means that keeping track of a liter of petrol for 4,200, or 20,000 for 6 eggs (misreported in Field Report #2 as the price for 1 dozen), or 400 for a button when we need 600 of them, becomes a tedious, time consuming, and overwhelming effort. My mind should be on other things, like the vision, approach and continued tenacity to maneuver through the unrelenting hurdles. To have our new book keeping help is an incredible gift from the Creator. All of the books will also be available to me on the computer via email and so the Ancient Ways Board can regularly stay in touch with the action on the ground. This is one of the important management keys for which I have admittedly been not-so-patiently waiting.

Through this new accounting connection, we have also met a generous teacher in a private Secondary school who is in the process of using Nhimbe as a community project for the students there, many of whom are excessively privileged, experientially unknowing about and unfortunately insulated from the real situation for many people in their country. They will have bake sales and other fundraising activities to create the finances and then most likely purchase Shona books for the Nhimbe library. They learn organizational skills as well as develop compassion for solving community issues. This is another incredible opening out of the clear blue that makes me continue with perseverance knowing that our prayers are being answered in the most unexpected ways.

THE ABYSS

Learning continues no matter what. Life in Zimbabwe today does not allow for any relaxing into the status quo, taking anything for granted or getting too comfortable. Every day is a challenge for everyone, no matter what ones background, financial condition, or skin color. I have had some fresh insights into the dilemmas of helping others, having certain cultural standards and expectations, and wanting to keep heart with providing assistance, while continuing to have regular setbacks and disappointments.

These problems come from both the crumbling economy where there seems to be a dark endless hole in the bucket but also the cultural differences between the African cosmology and not. The discussions with all of these new friends have pointed out one particular area that I would like to call “the abyss”.

Since the beginning of my experiences here, I have had challenges in understanding the Shona mind in the area of resources and assets, and ownership and use of them. Cosmas and I would discuss these difficulties since he brings to the situation much experience in travel and staying with friends on other continents. With his background, and my desire and need to comprehend

people's minds, we have often covered a lot of ground, trying to come up with understanding, insights and solutions.

My background brought me to Nhimbe through volunteering and so I entered into the relationship assuming a lot about equivalent efforts in Zimbabwe. I also came from an orientation that I am a steward of the land, a steward of my soul, and as a teacher/healer/networker, a steward for my community's growth and inheritance. I continually revise my ideas of what to expect from people in the way of volunteering, as well as how much a person should be expected to understand in terms of Nhimbe money versus my personal money or their own money.

A cultural abyss defined as a gulf, deep chasm or void would make sense on any account on this topic. The biggest problem has occurred with one specific example. If I give you \$50 to buy me a dress and it costs \$40, then my training and cultural expectation would be that you would return the \$10 to me when I receive the dress from you. I might offer to pay your gas if you went out of your way. If this were an on-going relationship, I would not take it casually if you repeatedly forgot to give me the change. I would wonder what your problem was and start wondering what kind of family you came from. It would cross my mind that you were "pocketing" the remainder intentfully.

Cosmas and I have talked about the ideas that people are struggling to survive in a desperate economy and so that pressure might push people into making new rules for their lives. So this territory has been covered many times and with great education on my part as to what I expect in my relationships here (for instance locking anything important all the time). Then, through these discussions with non-Shona residents who have tried to extend a helping hand and not been met with the expected reciprocity, some lights went on.

It really started when I asked a nanga comrade what is it with people when they do these things, and he said they were selfish. Then within a couple of weeks, he had done the same thing and yet he is one of the least "selfish" people I know, obviously on a service path. We talked about the idea that he should not spend money I have given to him for one purpose (petrol for a personal holiday day trip to see a healer consulting with Chamanuka's sister) on something we had not agreed upon (sodas or snacks) without talking about it. He agreed but only after, I asked for "my change" which had been spent.

Then it continued when Nicci asked me if I think that someone who keeps the change is thinking that they are stealing the money, as she has struggled with the same dynamics. I gave it a lot of thought because that really is what crosses the western mind. However, even some of our core Nhimbe folks who have great hearts and dedication to the cause, have been known to "forget" and keep the change. How can that be? Is it really forgetting? Is it only through our repetition of this principle that they will relate to it? Is it not part of the culture?

I see that Cosmas has taught his family (children, sisters, brothers) to return his change when he asks them to go to the store for him, but I wonder if that has really become a more serious agenda since he has been coming to the states and then in turn, generating more movement of dollars amongst many more people. This whole situation has confounded me for years but I think there is some new information surfacing - it is definitely not just about a suffering people who need to get some money any way they can. I think it really is about cosmology.

It is about systems of beliefs within the cultural context of history. Within the Shona system there was previously no concept for stewardship, as we know it. When I listen to my family and friends talk, they will go on in Shona and then all of a sudden throw in an English word. There was no Shona word for what they were describing, like car for example. This is like stewardship – there is no Shona word for it. Instead, someone has historically owned everything. The headman of a village owns the land with a right to distribute it to a family. The family owns the land with the right to pass it on to descendents. My sister owns things, my brother owns things, until they die and then their sisters or brothers respectively own their things first, and then the spouse and children.

But everything is owned by someone. Nothing is owned by a third party who takes care of it for someone else. (Although, they do use a 3rd party to negotiate the *lobola*, or money transactions for weddings, on behalf of the husband to be, but with quite stringent and well-known rules on how to operate in that function.) Even my sister's children are my children literally, not my sister's children that I care for. So bringing Nhimbe in, and creating something that is taken care of by all but owned by no one, makes no sense culturally.

Most people think that Cosmas and I own Nhimbe, from a cultural context. We cannot explain that there is no ownership as such. The Board of Directors does not even “own” it in that sense. What this means is that someone usually is not given something that isn't clearly theirs or someone else's, so how can they immediately relate to the idea that when I give them something to use for a purpose, that it isn't even mine, and that we are all stewards. How can I explain that they should take care of this project as if it is their own but not use it that way?

So to answer Nicci's question truthfully, I think that people do not consider themselves thieves if they keep the change. A thief to them is someone who deliberately trespasses upon your things when no one is there, with intent to remove, hide, and keep them. Whereas, when they forget the change and when asked, produce it, there is a different mind set at work.

For us, in the role of offering the help, this can be intensely defeating, with a wondering about why should I help someone who is continually trying to take

more from me. However, if indeed they are not looking at it in the way we look at it, and if after teaching about the concept of stewardship, things do change, then I would say that we have built a bridge. Life has to be full of bridge building to be successful as nothing is worth something only from one side. This is the only path to peace.

This has been a complicated subject to try and talk about, so I hope that there is more exposure to the concept of cultural differences from reading this and no misunderstandings due to my lack of ability to speak to it clearly. Cultural cosmology and the knowledge that exists in the morphic fields (ancestral, individual and otherwise) explain much about the frustrations, failures and fear of facing this abyss.

HEALTH TREATMENTS

Like usual I have had limited time to offer healings. The vibracussor and solar unit has been wonderful, the solar unit also being an amazing way to crank up the computer in the rural area! The vibracussor has also been useful for shoulder and foot stress relief. What I have done with treatments has been very satisfying particularly in the realm of being able “to do something” when faced with such suffering.

A couple of the most common problems that really stand out on many people are face sores and head tumors. These are not complaints that people ask for help for, but just conditions that I have noticed. Its kind of like obesity in America, just accepted, dealt with, unless it interferes with daily life. The sores are something more recent as I have never seen anything like this in my other trips. They may be on many parts of the body, but primarily they are obvious on the face which one sees without looking for it.

What is visible is an open sore that has no scabbing but just the next layer of skin, raw, red and open. I do not know if it has to do with the water problems in the city, the total lack of quality control in foods and other products where fillers are added to extend the product, or some brand of harsh cleaning product that is casually being used. There maybe an obvious medical diagnosis that I don't know because of little experience in this area. I do see the condition in many people. I see it in Mhondoro and in the city. Does anyone know anything about this?

The tumors are something I have noticed in the past but there seem to be more people with them. Primarily they are on the forehead, but also other parts of the head. It is disconcerting to say the least to see this as a regular state of health. I wonder if some chemical exposure has caused this, or the contaminated water, because of the relationship between toxin build up and the body not knowing what to do. I really do not know with little time to explore things adequately.

There were a couple of NMT treatments that stand out in my mind. The small boy with apparent rickets who could barely walk without pain and discomfort, that I saw and treated in September, has improved greatly. He is free from pain and able to run with the other children. His legs are still slightly bowed so he stumbles from time to time. We continued with a follow-up treatment this time. His school sponsor is a physician, so she sent some vitamin D and calcium for him as well, and his future is looking so much brighter. The parent's are obviously happy, as they had been to the doctor and hospital many times, never finding anything to help.

Another child had no interest in eating since she was 3 months old, worrying her parents greatly, and so we did a treatment, clearing up some emotional and receptivity issues. I saw her just before leaving and she was eating and playing which they said she had never done. She preferred soil to many offerings so we did get in one additional treatment, looking at this craving of minerals.

Helping the children and elderly was the most crucial place to put what little healing time I have had available, but realistically, unless I come here to live for a few months without focusing on the regular work I do here, I will never be able to make a dent in the need. The idea of living in the rural area, although attractive, would not allow me a life in the states with my home and family, friends and colleagues, and Ancient Ways activities and students. My primary responsibility while here already takes more of my resources than actually exist and so I really need other's commitment to improving the health of those on our path. This is again a call for help. Is there an NMT practitioner (see www.nmt.md) whose service path parallels our project and who is interested in coming to Zimbabwe for a few weeks to offer their knowledge, skills and abilities to these people?

MIDWIFERY

One of the ancient ways that has been virtually replaced in rural villages by modern intervention is that of midwifery. Sometimes women go to the hospital for a month or two, waiting to have their child. Too many women have told me of ailments which have begun after being in the hospital delivering their child. Some strange infection that they never had before all of a sudden appears. Hospital sanitation is deplorable to say the least.

It is illegal for women to deliver their babies at home without government training. We found a handful of women delivering babies in our six villages needing this formal training to be on the right side of the law, as well as to be better informed. We found and purchased many of the supplies that the training emphasizes as requirements (for example, mentholated spirits, cotton, gloves, and scissors) and are asking the women to purchase two items themselves. We are having a satchel made for the items they carry. We will pay for their transport to this weeklong training in a nearby town, while the government provides the training free of charge and they are responsible for their food.

At least, this is our plan presently (we must always roll with the changes as nothing here is stable). We hope to see them complete their training in the next couple of months. We are also encouraging them to work together to share ideas and information on technique and herbs for example. They are very interested in learning more, of both traditional indigenous ways as well as the latest in midwifery information from around the world.

The women here are called to help at the last minute and offer no prenatal counseling. They explained that they are usually told that they are needed when the woman is in pain. We talked about beginning to meet with the woman earlier in the pregnancy as we do in the states, and with that, a family planning counselor introduced herself at our meeting. She explained that it is vital that the women get involved earlier, and help the pregnant women know about being tested for HIV. If the mother is HIV positive then there are tablets available that she should take during her pregnancy, which assures that, the baby will not contract the virus. This in turn helps the community later, when the woman may pass on, and the others are caring for the child. It assures that the child has a chance of a normal life without the virus. The women were grateful to know about this and helped each other understand the importance of this intercession.

HEALTH & MUSIC

Our workshop to teach Zvirwere, the song developed for healing purposes, went extremely well. About 15 children and 35 adults came to the workshop. The way the timing turned out, we were able to invite teachers from our five schools as well as the HIV home-based caregivers. We spent a half-day sharing the song and its background.

Penny Yon, who was in the original group recording the CD, volunteered her time to spend the day in Mhondoro teaching the song, sharing the background, and offering her unique gifts to the people. She is a very talented musician, easy to follow teacher, and natural leader. Everyone was receptive to her and learned very quickly.

Penny is the first non-North American to volunteer and donate time to Nhimbe here. This was a new and much needed experience for me. Penny has spent years working with Keith Goddard and the Tonga people's project so understood much about our orientation. She also has helped to create the tape copies so that each school will have their own. We bought a tape player for our preschool to participate. An mbira player, Sonnie Chikoka, accompanied her, who was working something up with mbira. It was a great day for all!

PUBLIC HEALTH WORKSHOPS

The following three days were devoted to the health workshops that I have been waiting for years to do. We began and ended each village session (morning and afternoon) with the new Zvirwere song. We had a great team sharing the most

critical ideas with a goal to complete everything in 2 hours and make it all as metaphorical and experiential as possible.

- Music: We briefly shared the use of music and sound for healing. So much more could be explored in this topic.
- Water: We discussed the importance of cleaning the inside of our bodies by drinking enough (clean) water, the same way that you wash the outside of your body, your dishes and clothes. They had wondered if maybe I carried medicine around with me in that water bottle since I was always seen drinking from it – yes, Nature’s best!
- Diet: We discussed the importance of high PH in the diet (i.e. more fruits and vegetables) providing for resistance to illness by relating it to farming, the soil PH and their maize or tomatoes for example, sweetening the soil with lime. By using a blackboard, they were able to graphically see that most of what they were focusing on eating was creating low PH (or acidic conditions) in the body making it more susceptible to disease. We also discussed food storage.
- Passing Disease: We experimented with invisible florescent powder (in a hand lotion) and a black light to reveal how our normal hand washing is limited and how soap really helps remove germs. Everyone loved this part of the session as it was quite eye opening. It is said that hands pass 70% of disease but I wonder if in a culture such as this, where we are shaking literally everyone’s hand upon greeting, the percentage might be higher. This was easy to demonstrate, by listing 10 ways, seven of which were hands. This topic was also a place to discuss the passing of HIV and choices regarding that, as well as options in coughing and sneezing.
- Poisons: We addressed the awareness issues around handling chemicals, fertilizers and sanitizing products, explaining that absorption of these things through the skin and through breathing is responsible for other diseases, some of which once developed are not passed, like cancer for instance. I showed a way to use a scarf tying in the back and then returning around the front to create a mask substituting for a store bought model. They realized that they could use a plastic bag as a glove if they did not have real ones. As I have appallingly mentioned before, 100% of the people did not know that the chemicals they use regularly (fertilizer, ant powder and rat poison) are dangerous.
- Rest & Relaxation: We talked about how to really relax (i.e. not worrying while sitting there “relaxing”) and to understand how the gift of their laughter is a powerful medicine. The Shona are very vibrant and healing the way they share their humor and friendship. I was told that no one had ever suggested to them to relax and take it easy – work hard, hold fast and be strong is the normal motto.
- Prayer: We talked about the idea that no matter what religion one is, we all go to the same Creator when we pray. We talked about prayer and asking “Our Parent” for help but then not being there to receive it when it is given, because we energetically stay attached to the original concern or need, continuing to see life from the past, like a child that continues to

whine. Everyone related to the idea of being in gratitude for what we have as being a powerful choice. This could be a weekend workshop in itself. One person said that this topic touched him the most of all.

It was apparent that different things stood out for each person, and that very few people can absorb everything in one setting. Usually there was one person taking notes, with everyone really focusing on the information. I realized at the end of the last day, that this same workshop could be done in the US and many participants would only know about the poisons – we have had a lot of education about that even amongst the poor. Many people in mainstream America do not realize the importance of these other topics either, so this was really a wonderful opportunity we offered them.

Small prizes were given for answering questions correctly, including some remaining t-shirts donated from old Zimfest stock. (Thanks Zimfest!) At the end of the workshop each family in attendance was given a bar of soap (from our remaining stock of soap made early 2004) and a pair of heavy gloves, costing Nhimbe less than a total of \$1.50 USD per family. By the end of the six village sessions, we had received two chickens, one rooster, ears of *maputi* (roasting maize), sweet potatoes, dry beans and a quantity of peanuts. Everyone was so very grateful for our time and energy.

We worked hard going from village to village and it was an incredible experience, learning more with each session. The translators and the assistants made such a great team; it made me think about how the format could be carried out all over Zimbabwe. In 2 hours, a lot of information was provided in a very hands-on and practical way.

The most important part to me was about safer handling of chemicals (Ask yourself: Did God make what is in that container, or did a human? Did my grandmother use this?) Cosmas and others were reflecting that chemicals have been around for about 20 years. Before that people were not just dropping dead all of the time. Malnutrition and HIV compromise immune systems, but in my opinion, the most insidious assault is by the chemicals. I feel very satisfied that we have taken the first step in the right direction. We have not solved the problems, but education is a start. It makes the stream of grief that comes from watching massive numbers of people continually suffer and die, so much more bearable, to be doing something towards this end. Thanks so much for listening.

NHIMBE PRESCHOOL

The use of e-Pap in the preschool was such a great thing in helping the children strengthen their immune systems. When I arrived I found out that the Ministry of Health had declared it unfit as the zinc percentage was higher than their recommendation. Now, everyone is unable to get e-Pap! I am not sure what the solution is, but hope to contact others previously using it to see if they have any suggestions. It is so darn aggravating to see something that is helping people

being put out of their reach. Again, it does not matter how much money you have if things are unavailable.

Each time I come to see the preschool children they get more familiar with me and so it becomes more like visiting an old friend. I managed to get some class time video inside (singing number, letter, and body part songs) and outside (watering strawberries and playing). I also got many of their pictures and photos for you, as I do with the older children in the government schools.

Cosmas was looking for petrol one day (each time we were in town, he would spend literally hours on the phone, scouting around following up leads, trying to locate the scarce commodity that dried up right after the election) and he came across a preschool bus that had Montessori on the side! What an incredible find! The timing of this joins Karen Barton from Oregon, the spark behind the preschool fire, as she is committed to a Montessori conference in Sydney, Australia this July with a hope of sourcing funding for our efforts.

On the way to the airport, we stopped by the Montessori school to get pictures of the classroom and further contact info. They suggested that they could help us as they have all of the Montessori books. One teacher has the official training, and the original founder is now in London. Apparently, there was a Montessori training center in Zimbabwe for 3 years but they are now gone. Again, little miracles led his footsteps to stumble upon this school and we are tremendously grateful! Was the petrol tank half full or half empty?

We did manage to locate a peanut grinder for the preschool as well, again with a lead from Nicci. The core Nhimbe people will be setting up a system for purchasing the peanuts in the shell from the villagers, getting the teens involved with shelling (and feeling more a part of Nhimbe), finding the best roasters around (primarily the elder women), and hiring a grinder to make the *dovi* at the Center in a hygienic setting. Maybe weekly or bi-weekly, she will grind enough for the preschool as they are using a liter a day, but could use two. Fresh ground *dovi* is well known for being so much more nutritious, tasty, and actually going further due to its unprocessed state.

EDUCATION

We have taken almost all of the pictures of the children and retrieved their letters to you from all five schools! This is always a major feat, which I continue to enjoy, feeling very connected to the special bonding happening between you, the families and the children. We will have about 300 pictures to print - does anyone have the time and facilities to help with the printing? We print four photos per page so that totals about 75 pages. We stock photo paper and primarily need the help to get from CD to print. Any assistance along these lines is greatly appreciated, as the organizing of volunteers to put together the letter to you is a challenge, so that would be one less job to complete. Do call if you can help!

We have begun to sponsor another student who did well in her final exams for Secondary school (actually the only one graduating '04) and so will help the parents send her on to the A level, by paying half of her fees. This is something we have been trying out gradually, to see how it goes. It gets complicated because each child going onto the A level (Form 5 and 6) is attending the school of their choice and follow-up is more complicated for us. We do not want to do it without checking on their progress as so many things come up for people these days to interrupt normal living.

We bought schoolbooks for four special needs children who are showing great signs of interest, ability and parental support in their education. We will be cycling those books back into the library when they move on to the next grade, or supporting another child showing the extra achievement. Janis Weeks, visiting Zimbabwe, brought some of our donated library books along so that we were able to increase the English section – thanks Janis! That kind of help is always greatly appreciated if anyone is ever traveling our way. Do not fail to contact me if you have room in your suitcase! The library is becoming a more popular idea all the time, as more residents understand its function. It is a rather new idea in our villages.

UNIFORMS AND PROJECTS

We were able to find most of the fabric for uniforms, but needed to accept much in the way of substitutes. Many fabrics are not available because it takes foreign currency to buy the fabric inks and dyes and that is not available, and because the last lot of cotton was sold out in bulk to one buyer so there is a cotton shortage.

The PTC or headmaster of each school has to decide what substitute to use. We are currently using two print substitutes and needing a 3rd. Much poly/cotton has been replaced with polyester. However, I am happy to say that the kids will have new outfits! I wish we could convince all four primary schools to agree on one color with just slight variations for uniqueness. Maybe this is an idea for October. Its an enormous task to both locate and keep inventory for so many uniform fabrics – consider that girls usually have 2 fabrics and the boys another, that's 15 different fabrics in a country that is hard pressed to keep them in stock.

We found out this trip that the man, who we have dealt with for 5 years by buying his uniform fabric, is a very active and helpful person who is involved in many self-help projects all over Zimbabwe. Offering his help to his community originated as part of his spiritual path and as a way to help the many Zimbabweans with roots in Arabia to get started in their own businesses. He said that he could get whatever equipment we might need to be able to start up any business, for instance, a grain grinder or larger *dovi* operation. His suggestion is that if we are generating cash in some business, then the people will not be always waiting for me to arrive with money, but instead be generating more of it on their own.

It feels like we are headed this direction correctly, but really have to first get better and tighter procedures and controls set up for managing what we already have going. With Cosmas out of the country for 6 months at a time, and my visits for limited duration, it has been tough, but now we have a new manager in Mhondoro, Charles Muungani, supported by a great staff, to lead the crew year around so that Cosmas and my absence will not be an issue. Once we have more time working out the kinks with this new system, we will have a better foundation to implement more ideas that are coming our way.

For instance, through the Stevens we have found out about an association that will inexpensively train people in beekeeping. John raises bees himself. That sounds like a delightful project. I used to be a beekeeper and so fully appreciate what is involved, at least with the western method. I also met their friends who weave, working with the woolens from angora goats and sheep. It looks like there is an animal shortage currently as the farms were dispersed but they are working with the existing wool stock.

What an idea – raising sheep or goats and teaching weaving! Ironically, again, I used to be a weaver and have found yarns it to be a wonderful medium. Ancient Ways actually has a small weaving project in Peru to preserve the traditional dying techniques since synthetics are becoming so popular there. It really helps to balance out the hard and cold feel of the stone carvings in the gift shop/warehouse, with the warm and cozy energy of wool in varying hues and tones. So many ideas, so little time, all possibilities, all in God's time.

It is worth mentioning that the women who were buying sewing machines have completely cleared their loans. They now fully own their own machines! This is a great achievement and we are so very happy to see them independently operating!

IN CLOSING

Before I finish this rather long Field Report, I need to emphasize that everyone in Zimbabwe, no matter what kind of money one has, is being affected by the desperate lack of everything coming from the crumbling economy. The threat of no food, hanging over their heads, is menacing. Petrol has been almost completely dry with black market petrol going for 24,000 per liter as I left. The phone systems are a continual problem, with it taking ½ hour to get through (or not at all), and then being cut off in mid-conversation. The Harare water is not fit for consumption carrying pathogens beyond belief, something you can smell and taste on a regular basis.

I cannot begin to explain what it does to one's mind to spend so much time every day on just surviving the current reality. Add to this the assault on health and we have a humanitarian crisis. There is so much to learn from all of this and I only hope that these Field Reports I send back, besides being extremely therapeutic

for me, will help someone directly or indirectly as we share a common concern for the people.

We must focus on optimism, and our accomplishments, holding the thought of our successes and where we are headed as the utmost importance. I only wish solutions came quicker and easier for all who are enduring the current difficulties. Thank you again for all of the energy you have sent those in the Nhimbe for Progress villages and Cosmas and I, through the remote NMT sessions, Reiki, prayer, and just plain good thoughts. We all seriously appreciate your intentful sincerity, continued support financially and emotionally, and your heart extending across the world, closely holding us there. Blessings to you in your life! You make an incredible difference to us, giving us more courage and conviction to hold fast!

Yours, tenaciously, in gratitude and in love... Jaiaen