



Denver Presbytery Zimbabwe Partnership

Zimbabwe Summit Review Sessions *Denver Presbytery Viewpoints*

Session 1 – May 26, 2016: HIV/AIDS and Health Issues + Partnership

We asked our partners to talk with us about other partners and where things are currently in those relationships.

We learned that the partnership with ***Greenock and Paisley*** has ended. There may be some congregations still 'twinned' with Scottish congregations, but the Presbytery to Presbytery relationship was dissolved.

We learned the key, ongoing relationship with the ***Eastern Synod Reformed Church of England*** revolves around 'twinning.' Any congregation in their denomination that wants to be matched with one in Zimbabwe is encouraged to do so. That said, the churches in the Synod of the Reformed Church of England are encouraged to 'twin' with another church and they have relationships in a variety of countries; not only Zimbabwe.

The ***Church of Scotland*** explored the Presbytery to Presbytery concept but concluded twinning is what would work best on their end because the system of twinning was a long established practice that worked well for their churches.

UPCSA, The Uniting Presbyterian Church of Southern Africa, which is the denomination for the Presbytery of Zimbabwe continues to support our brothers and sisters in Zimbabwe in assorted ways. The Moderator of the denomination spent a number of weeks in Zimbabwe in 2015 and spoke at the first annual inter-generational conference. They assist with human resource development and materials.

The relationship with the ***PCUSA, Presbyterian Church in the USA***, is continuing to strengthen in part because of ongoing relationship with Doug Tilton, the Regional Liaison for Southern Africa for the PCUSA; who was graciously present with us in Denver for a week during this spring 2016 delegation visit. Dr. Tilton was present for two of the three Summit Review sessions. Recently he helped us create a stronger connection with the CCAP (Church of Central Africa Presbyterian) in Zimbabwe, especially related to the borehole project in Eiffel Flats. We also now participate regularly in the ZZM (Zambia, Zimbabwe, and Mozambique) Mission Network organized by the PCUSA, which is helping to strengthen these ties as well.



HIV/AIDS and Other Health Issues

Awareness and Information about **HIV/AIDS** in congregations is ongoing. People feel the support of their church community and feel more hopeful as they watch people on anti-viral drugs living longer and healthier lives. In some instances congregations have small support groups where those with HIV meet and go together to get medications. Doug Tilton mentioned that as people live longer with HIV, because of medications and better nutrition, it has created a more lax view of the seriousness of this virus, and there is a risk of increased infection because of this attitude.

Clean water is critical to health in Zimbabwe on a variety of levels. It was noted that the ongoing development of boreholes has greatly improved life and health in assorted locations. Shackleton was noted as an example of a location that now has a functioning medical clinic because of the addition of the borehole.

Cancer is on the rise in Zimbabwe. There was some discussion about breast cancer and how this is an issue in both of our contexts, though it was noted that assorted types of cancer are on the rise. Partners are encouraged to keep sharing information on this topic. There is need for more education. Also better diagnosis options and then access to treatment is critical.

With education and awareness, women are able to detect breast cancer in the early stages. Our POZ partners indicated that churches in Zimbabwe and the community at large would benefit from self-check pamphlets and educational events where people with knowledge could speak about the exams and the importance of early detection. Breast cancer is often viewed as a woman's issue and therefore men do not persist in encouraging their wives to do self-examinations but our POZ partners felt with increased knowledge about the consequences, men would be active participants in this aspect of their wives' health.

Prayer was lifted up as a key way we can support each other. We discussed how prayer requests can be more specific and how this would help to build even deeper connections between us. We can pray about health issues for each other.

Tragically in Zimbabwe there is increased **Drug Use** among young people. They add something to water that literally causes them to be out of touch with reality for a day or more at a time. There are other 'street drugs' which have gained popularity and are easily accessible and cheap.



Session 2 – May 31, 2016: Children at Risk and Schools

Drug and Alcohol Abuse

There is increased drug usage when children are out of school; often begins within a few days. Parents cannot afford the school fees and therefore children end up on the streets. Once on the streets the girls often become sex slaves and fall deeper into drug abuse.

Orphans and Lack of Resources

It is estimated there are 1.5 million orphans in Zimbabwe. The Lovemore School was a wonderful place for the street kids who stayed there. The "Mom" figure was so important to the youth. They were expected to help with chores.

Water

Boreholes help attract people to send their children to preschool and primary school; the clean water is important to the parents.

Boreholes make so much possible. With the solar panels for power, electric fees are not being paid, no payment for water. Water is then used to make bricks and therefore buildings, gardens for a better diet, and toilets for hygiene.

Gloag Ranch has a large tract of land that can be used for farming and agriculture. There is a need for another borehole at the primary school which would give a second water source to use on the land. Perhaps some of our eastern churches could assist with the education of agriculture which would allow for students to learn being self-sufficient.

Schools and Insufficient #'s

Zimbabwe now needs 2,000 secondary schools. Many youth are walking 10-20 k to and from school which leaves them tired and hungry when they get home. Muslims in the country are ready to help with this problem; which is a concern for many. Teachers are paid partly by the government and partly by school fees. School fees are \$120 a month for preschool kids, \$150 a term for primary school children, and \$400 a term for secondary students. Books, uniforms and O and A level exam fees are in addition to these fees.

Jobs and Unemployment

Agriculture and farming will be discussed with the people at locations that have a borehole now, especially the Moringa tree which grows easily and provides an incredible source of vitamins and protein. HIV children would benefit from parts of this tree being in their diet. The Heifer project is in Zimbabwe again.



Pastor K felt that education is the greatest factor in moving girls out of poverty. If there are 100 people in a congregation, 80% are unemployed. Women make up 60-70% of a congregation. The benefit of income projects that women create quickly reach the children. Mothers are able to provide food for the children and cover their school fees. Food means the kids can pay attention in school and get more out of their education. Enrollment in school provides structure for the kids, keeps them away from those distributing drugs, and gives hope for work following the completion of their education. Some income producing projects women have managed successfully include making peanut butter and sewing school uniforms.

Homelessness and Attendant Problems

Getting youth off the streets and into a school is a pressing problem. Private schools are more expensive than public schools. The government has high standards for church run schools which can create some difficulties in starting a new program. There are no POZ schools in the cities. If these schools were available, this could reduce the number of kids on the street. To staff the schools affordably, retired teachers may be willing to accept a small stipend, sharing their skills as a form of ministry. There is difficulty in doing a background check on those applying for teaching positions. Uniforms and books must be purchased by the families.

Other Resources

Entities need to be researched that might give grants to begin new businesses. HCOC (Heather Chimhoga Orphan Care Center is using a 'grandmother' in the community program which might be a model to use in other locations; Janet Guyer from PCUSA; Mission Co-Worker is a valuable resource on women's and children's issues; Wonder about Hunger Program grants; Also using Short Term service workers in the partnership to help with training. Doug Tilton confirmed that the PCUSA Self Development of People program was undergoing some changes and was not currently an option here. We have many human resources which need to be explored further.

STRATEGIES AND RESOURCES TO ADDRESS THE TWO PRIORITY ISSUES

1. Jobs/unemployment

2. Water

1. Connect the two issues, water and jobs/unemployment, through farming/agriculture training/agriculture product marketing.
2. Utilize Gloag Ranch as an experimental classroom to teach:
 - a) Development of water resources (e.g., bore hole construction and maintenance; rainwater catchment and cistern systems; filtration methods)
 - b) Agriculture production and methods to increase agricultural yields
 - c) Marketing, sales and distribution of agricultural products.
3. Initiate a city/rural student exchange, whereby orphaned city kids can learn at Gloag and vice versa.



4. Initiate an “adopt-an-orphan” program to house the kids. If Heifer Project would be willing to put resources here, perhaps families who take in orphans could be the first to participate in the Heifer Project. Further discussion would be necessary. Would the church need to oversee that the children who were being taken in actually received resources? The goal would be the care of the orphans as well as the other family members and that the orphans were able to participate in a family system.
5. Partner with other Zim churches, denominations, government agencies, NGOs, universities, educators, etc. to increase resource base and generate economies of scale.
6. Pray!

Session 3 – June 8, 2016: Resource Development and Church Growth

Related to the idea of a **Central Fund**, there was conversation about how to create such while at the same time avoiding dependency and enhancing partnership. We also discussed how to make it sustainable/ self-sustaining long term. Could it be a Presbytery of Zimbabwe managed asset? One suggestion was investing in an agricultural project, like cattle (maybe at Gloag). This project could become sustainable and be used to provide ongoing support to a Central Fund.

We celebrate that the number of women in ministry in Zimbabwe has increased to 5 now. Also, the total number of ministers has more than doubled since 2009. The problem of course is how to sustain them when so many congregations cannot pay the stipend.

One of the delegates talked about how challenging it is when a church cannot afford to pay the Pastor’s stipend. Some elders have left certain churches because they were uncomfortable telling the Pastor the congregation could not pay them. In other instances, Pastors are leaving and going elsewhere; like England or South Africa, because of lack of resources. It was suggested that we need training/counseling/and mentoring for both Pastors and Elders in such instances!

There is also an issue about support for health care for current and retired Pastors.

In the training of Evangelists, they and/or their spouses are given training in a trade, in addition to theological training. This allows Evangelists to have a ‘tent making’ skill and supplement their incomes.

There is a tension between church growth and ministers’ stipends. The full stipend for the Presbytery would be around \$120,000 for all the ministers. We are encouraged by some donations to start a Central Fund. One question: how would it be administered? All agreed it would probably be best to hold the funds outside the country due to the current banking instability.



Prayer Support was suggested as key for our partnership.

Regarding **Church Growth** we learned that our brothers and sisters in Zimbabwe now have applications for their phones for the Bible in both Shona and Ndebele. This was very exciting news! We talked about how it would be helpful to have a hymnbook application for phones as well! This idea had a lot of passion from the time shared in small groups. Application development would be a great way to share resources and increase accessibility for a broader audience. It is hoped that if such are developed in the future such applications would be free or low fee!

It was exciting to hear that there are so many different 'evangelism' tools being used from wedding and funeral services, to boreholes and medical clinics! A member of the Lomagundi Mission Partnership said that a current member of the Lomagundi Presbyterian Church came to the church because they received medical care at the clinic. Another person told a story about someone coming to one of the newly drilled boreholes for water and asking: "who is responsible for this borehole?" And then a member of the congregation says: "the Presbyterian Church!" Such an encounter reminds us of our call to give that 'cup of cold water' in the name of Christ!

It was suggested that **Leadership Training** resources might be available through the UPCSAs for ministers, evangelists and elders. This has enabled them to bring more 'substance' to critical situations. There is a value in standardization and mutual support that can come from an organized, structured approach.