



MINUTE FOR MISSION

June 15, 2004

Lovemore Home: A Ministry of Compassion on Behalf of Children-at-Risk

Zimbabwe continues to be a country in serious decline because of the unstable government that has caused major economic, fuel, and food crises. The HIV/AIDS pandemic is growing. This situation has severely affected the life of children in the country. Increasing numbers of orphans and abandoned children are living on the streets. The statistics are so overwhelming that the figures sometimes do not compute in our minds. For instance, we learned recently that by the year 2005 there may be as many as one million orphans with AIDS in Zimbabwe. The need for action is incredible.



Peter learning to play the marimba at Lovemore Home (June 2003)

In Harare, the capital city, the Uniting Presbyterian Church of Southern Africa (UPCSA) has responded to this need of children-at-risk. The church operates a transitional, residential home for street boys called Lovemore Home, and as Mission Co-Workers we are actively involved. PC(USA) and The Outreach Foundation help to support this program. Recently six young boys between the ages of six and eight were taken into the home. We met the boys the day after they arrived at Lovemore Home and fell in love with them. They are so bright and cheerful, just precious. Imagine how we felt the following day, when we learned about their backgrounds. All of them have been severely abused sexually, physically, emotionally, and spiritually by older boys, men, and women on the streets. Three of the six have venereal disease. We were horrified and heartbroken. They deserve so much better. They need to know that they matter to God, and to us.



Younger boys have different needs than older ones, and our staff and volunteers at Lovemore Home are making adjustments to meet these needs. There is an incredible amount of trauma and stress in the lives of these boys that needs to be relieved. We rejoice that our director, Helen Tanyanyiwa, is a very dedicated and capable social worker and is well equipped to deal with the issues these new boys bring with them.

As we travel around Zimbabwe, we observe the rapidly escalating needs of children. Through the UPCSA, Presbyterians continue to play a significant role in helping to educate vulnerable boys and girls at Presbyterian secondary schools. In addition to responding to this educational need, they are beginning to provide church-based and community-based care for orphans and destitute children around the country.

Responding to these critical needs at this time in Zimbabwe's history will not be easy, but we are convinced that PC(USA) congregations will respond to the call. Please join us in prayer and celebration as the church is called to care for suffering children.

Bob and Bobbi Snyder
PC(USA) Mission Co-Workers
Harare, Zimbabwe

Do you have a mission story to tell? Would you like to read inspiring stories of Presbyterians in mission? Visit the Witness Season Web site: www.pcusa.org/witness. New minutes for mission are posted every two weeks.

For more information on the Witness Season mission education emphasis contact Billie Healy, Associate for Mission Education Resources (888) 728-228-7228, ext. 5689, or Bhealy@ctr.pcusa.org.