

March 2009

- Prime Minister Morgan Tsvangirai's wife, Susan, dies in tragic car accident!
- 4011 killed in a Cholera outbreak, 89,000 others affected!
- Official inflation rate sets new record - 231 million percent!
- "1 Trillion Dollar" note released in Feb 2009!

Dear friend,

Zimbabwe remains constantly in the news headlines around the world. Observers continue to reveal the apparent disregard by the country's leaders for their own citizens who are struggling to survive.

This complete and utter disregard was recently highlighted at the 85th birthday party of Zimbabwe's President Robert Mugabe. Supporters donated a reputed USD\$250,000 for 2000 bottles of champagne, 8000 lobsters, 500kg cheese, 4000 portions of caviar, 4000 packets of cream crackers, 3000 ducks, 4000 packets of pork sausages, 4000 packets of borewors, 16000 eggs, 16000 croissants, 8000 boxes of Ferrero Rocha chocolates, 12000 muffins, 500 bottles of Johnny Walker Blue Label, Jack Daniels and Chivas (22yrs), 100 bottles of Remy Martin, 4000 chickens, 3000 cakes, 500 bottles of olive oil and an 85kg cake. (*The Times, Feb 10th*)

In stark contrast, "Our staff say that people in Zimbabwe are dropping dead on the streets from Cholera. They've witnessed people mixing cow dung with what's left of their food to make it go further. This is poverty at its most dehumanising." - *Caritas Internationalis Secretary General, Lesley-Anne Knight.*

Once a beacon of hope in Africa, Zimbabwe's economy has collapsed and its infrastructure is in tatters. It faces the world's highest official inflation rate; almost half of it's population is in the grip of a hunger crisis; and it is battling a cholera epidemic that has taken over 4,000 lives since August 2008. The country's economy, agriculture, education and healthcare systems have all virtually collapsed.

Sadly, instead of reaching out for international aid, a defensive government continues to lash out at almost every helping hand. When urgent action was required to reverse the incredible inflation, or stem the affects of cholera outbreaks, the country was handicapped by a stalled power-sharing deal between President Mugabe and Prime Minister Tsvangirai. The recent car accident continues to cast a spectre over the tenuous peace, brokered by the South African Government, between these political rivals.

There are two things we can do: firstly we can pray for Zimbabwe and their leaders according to Ezekiel 36:23: "*And I will give you a new heart, and I will put a new spirit in you. I will take out your stony, stubborn heart and give you a tender, responsive heart.*"

Secondly we can continue to send food, and other relief items to Pastor Ephiel from **Celebration Centre**, our trusted friends, and efficient stewards in Zimbabwe. Pastor Ephiel continues to operate freely due to his impeccable reputation built over twenty years.

Ps. Ephiel has distributed hundred's and thousands of kilograms of food, blankets, and bibles to the underprivileged & vulnerable: the elderly, the homeless, the infirm, and young children.

