

New Administration System for the Orphan Program

It is estimated that today in Zambia there is approximately a million orphans and vulnerable young people – a staggering thought. It is only when we think of them as our son, daughter or grandchild wandering the streets homeless, scavenging for food or being abused that the situation really starts to hit home. Any little that can be done to help such young people in these appalling conditions must be worthwhile, not only to save a young life from human disaster but to give them an opportunity to hear and respond to the gospel. This is one of the key aims of SHAREAfrica and by the kindness of our sponsors we are attempting to do this for around 200 young people in different parts of Zambia. Such work is not easy; there are massive difficulties and problems, however by the Lord's help we seek to overcome these difficulties and in this article we share some of the problems and how we are seeking to overcome them.



Challenges

Among the many challenges of running an orphan program where children remain in the villages and are therefore dispersed across the country, is keeping track of each child to check that they are in good health and that the money donated is having the desired benefit. This is done by regularly visiting each child at their home and asking relevant questions about their school performance and their general well-being. Presently this visitation takes place at the beginning of each school term when we pay the fees for the next term. Other than recording the financial transaction the rest of the information is informal, unstructured, and not in a language or format suitable for distribution.

We are very aware that every sponsor ought to receive some information about the children they sponsor. We would also like tighter monitoring and control so that when issues are identified, such as a child going missing, or taken seriously ill, or where the guardian is unfit to care for the child, then the information is recorded and appropriate follow up steps are put in place

In an attempt to address these weaknesses we have developed a computer based record keeping system to hold the details about the child; guardian; school records, the elders responsible; as well as visit reports. We have also included an option where the child or guardian can communicate directly with the sponsor. Once this information is entered into the system it will be made available for the sponsor to view on-line. To reserve the confidentiality of each child the sponsors will only see the information about their child - access will be controlled by secure passwords.

For new sponsors we are making a provision whereby people can sponsor a child through the SHAREAfrica web site. The site will provide information about the Orphan Program and if anyone wishes to select one of the many available children then they will be able to do so by signing up on-line. The instructions on how this all works will be available on the web site.

The need for such a change is generally accepted, however, the downside is that it significantly increases the administration effort. To cover some of the cost we will have to increase the sponsorship for new orphans to £15 per month. Existing sponsors will not be affected. The additional costs for administration will be met by SHAREAfrica.

So far the Program has been a remarkable success. Around 200 children have been given an opportunity that otherwise they wouldn't have had. Some have gone on to further education with hopes of aspiring to play a key part in society and the development of the nation. We have also been greatly encouraged by the spiritual progress of many of the children. To see young people able to read and understand their Bible is a great blessing in itself.

The introduction of the new system is likely to take several months as we collect and load the necessary data. Most of this will be done by our people in Zambia so we request your patience as we proceed. As soon as we have the basic data loaded we will write to each sponsor individually explaining the system and providing passwords to those who wish to view the information on-line.

Creating Employment – A Practical Example

Trying to meet the need of poor believers in Africa is a real challenge. It is widely accepted that sustainable employment is the key to raising living standards and this is ultimately what SHAREAfrica is seeking to achieve – helping the poor to help themselves.

It is encouraging to see the initiative shown by our young men in SHAREZambia. In spite of many difficulties they keep on trying to earn a livelihood by doing the things they know best. The small project described in this article was proposed by Mwewa Mwindula, a young enthusiastic believer with some experience in agriculture, and we thought it worth publishing the story to give you a practical example and an insight into some of the things SHAREAfrica is seeking to encourage.



Much of the work carried out by hand is tedious and back braking



Poverty and hardship is prevalent in this community and the opportunity for some to earn a few Kwacha (a few pounds a week) is something much sought after. This project will use just 2 hectares of a 7 hectare site and it is our intention to develop the site further for more commercially viable activities. A number of things are under review but in order to make a significant step towards poverty reduction, particularly among our fellow believers, we firstly must raise the necessary resources.

Please pray that efforts such as described in this article will bring help and blessing to the dear African believers.



Mwewa Mwindula

Cabbage is one of the most important vegetables grown in Africa. Cabbage can be used in various recipes. The average Zambian home prefers cabbage to other vegetables because it has a long shelf life.

With this in view I requested funding from SHAREAfrica to start this project which will not only provide fresh and affordable vegetables, but will also contribute to the economic wellbeing of the nearby community by providing work for the local residents. For instance, the project will directly benefit four workers not to mention others that will be called upon at various times to do temporary work.

I am confident that the project will succeed. Cabbage does not need elaborate management and can be grown organically. We will generate efficiencies by avoiding the use of artificial fertilizers and using manure which we can get from the adjacent farm at virtually no cost other than transportation.

Furthermore, unlike tomatoes and other vegetables the cabbage prices do not fluctuate as much, meaning that we can determine the selling price before harvest.

If successful the project may pave the way to easily market other vegetables or crops that we may plan to undertake in the future.

A small business plan was prepared showing the expected return on investment. Start-up money was requested to pay wages and to provide piping for irrigation. We will work hard to make this a success and I am confident we will generate sufficient profit to repay the initial investment.

Mwewa is a young man in his late twenties, a sound Christian with a real interest in assembly work and an able preacher!

Tragedy hits brother Levi's family



It was with extreme sadness we received word a few weeks ago that as a result of a road crash, our dear sister Abigail Zulu had been called suddenly into the presence of the Lord. Abigail was the wife of our much respected and loved brother Levi Zulu an elder in the Lilanda assembly Lusaka and chairman of SHAREZambia. To compound our brother's sorrow his mother Jesinala Mumba and sister Lidah Mumba were also called into the presence of the Lord, again as a result of a car crash, as they travelled home to Nyimba after attending Abigail's funeral. Levi's brother (Silas Mumba) who was driving, sustained severe head injuries but was recovering well at the time of writing this article.

Prayer is requested for our dear brother and his family at this time. As trustees of SHAREAfrica we have spent many times of fellowship both in the home and in the assembly with our dear brother and sister and a fitting tribute to our dear sister has been sent to us by brother Samuel Kapanji a fellow elder with brother Levi in the assembly at Lilanda.

Tribute to Abigail Zulu

Who can find a virtuous wife? For her worth is far above rubies. The heart of her husband safely trusts in her so he will have no lack of grain. She does him good and no evil all the days of her life. Proverbs 31 v 10-11.

Abigail was born in the year 1958 and was born again in the year 1977. In 1982 after a time of friendship at university Abigail and Levi were married in Kabwe Chapel Zambia. God blessed them in many ways and in particular with three children born to them - Isaac [now 27] Daniel [now 25] and Tamara [now 20]. Both were successful in business but more importantly were faithful to the Lord and a blessing to many.

Abigail was suddenly called into the presence of the Lord on 9th July as a result of a road crash on the Mansa – Chembe road Luapula province in the north east of Zambia.

Sister Abby as she was popularly known by believers in the assembly at Lilanda was a fully accomplished believer whose commitment and love for the Lord and His people was an inspiration to many who came in contact with her.

Abby had a genuine interest in people and had a way of getting into people's hearts and always had an encouraging word for any brother or sister who was downcast. She was often heard to say 'is anything the matter?'. She was a peace maker and one who was always seeking solutions to various challenges. She was a tender hearted sister and her deep sense of humility won her admiration and respect from all and sundry. She faced life with a smile, talked with a smile and when necessary rebuked with a smile speaking softly but frankly.

Abby's hospitality was tremendous; her home was open to both local and international guests alike and many can testify to the warmth of fellowship extended and her unstinting use of resources. Levi and Abby took a special interest in guiding young couples, particularly those anticipating marriage.



The funeral service was held at Lusaka Gospel Hall where brother Ray Barham officiated. Many hundreds from all over Zambia attended and tributes were read from friends far and wide.

It can be said of our dear sister in the words of .2 Tim 4 v 7-8 'I have fought the good fight, I have finished the race, I have kept the faith'.

Annual Youth Bible Camp

This is now the 4th year of the Youth Bible Camp at Mwembeshi which is held on SHAREAfrica farmland 40 miles from Lusaka. Approximately 400 young people from assemblies in and around the capital Lusaka attend each year, plus believers from the local assembly just down the road at Munyeu. The camp runs for about 4 days and although the meeting conditions are basic the desire, interest and appetite for the clear, practical teaching of the Word of God amongst the young people is most encouraging.

The time is profitably spent in the public teaching of the Word of God. There are also times set aside when what has been taught is discussed in smaller groups thus encouraging a personal interest in the Word of God. Many have been greatly helped and blessed by the instruction received. The gospel is also preached and each year quite a number have professed to be saved among the small percentage of unbelievers who attend.

Each of the young people are encouraged to memorize a portion of scripture (around 20 verses) and all who can successfully repeat it at the end of the camp are rewarded with a Bible or a gift of clothing. It is sad to hear from many of the young people who attend that they don't receive much clear Bible teaching through the rest of the year. Few of their elders have the ability to communicate the simple truths of Scripture and indeed many elders have a poor grasp themselves of the truths of God's Word. There are many reasons for this including the fact that many are unable to read and some may not have a personal copy of the Scriptures.

Many young people also tell of their need to finish their schooling (for which they need funds) and of the difficulty in finding employment. In some little way we are trying to address this issue through our orphan program and in other practical ways. The need however is vast and it is only as the Lord gives help and provides resources we are able to help and encourage both in a spiritual and practical way.

As the camp work is once again organised this year SHAREAfrica will provide practical support which we trust will help to establish many young believers in the basic truths of Scripture. Please pray for the Lord's continued help and blessing on this vital work which clearly is so important for the continuance of assembly witness and the furtherance of God's kingdom.

Shipments

We regularly ship material into Africa and are frequently asked questions about what type of goods are most useful. Since we jointly support both the assembly witness as well as the empowerment of people to earn their living, the goods are normally a combination of Bibles, literature, plus various items that can be used to either start or supplement a small business. Since Zambia is a landlocked country the cost of shipping a 40 foot container (loaded to 25 ton) is between ten and twelve thousand pounds. Since many of the items can be purchased locally or can be imported from South Africa, we must be wise in deciding what to ship.

In the past we have received generous donations of equipment, vehicles, building supplies, as well as surplus equipment from schools. Since the street value of what we ship normally exceeds the shipping cost we feel it makes good use of the Lord's money.

Some of the upcoming needs:

- Equipment for primary schools
- Any type of agricultural equipment so long as it is in reasonable working order and can be maintained. We are trying to extend the growing season for subsistence farmers and are looking for large polythene 'greenhouses'. We also need a small van so we can collect vegetables and get them to market.
- We are planning to erect sheds for storing produce. The steel structures are ready to ship but we need fittings such as electrical fittings, standby generators, coolers and large industrial type freezers.
- We would like to build our own fencing and employ people to do the fabrication. We therefore require a small vertical drill, grinders, welding machine, plus pipe and metal benders.

A considerable amount of new clothes is also donated. While it is uneconomical to ship these on their own there is always sufficient space for lightweight boxes - we like to utilise all the space. The clothes are greatly appreciated by the sisters who either distribute them or sell them within their communities.

We again express our thanks to everyone who has helped in a material way. We also thank those who have donated money - without which we couldn't exist. Above all we look to the Lord for clear direction as we seek to develop this exercise.

Loving our neighbour as ourselves seems an impossible challenge, but we must keep on trying.

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