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When Thank You Seems Inadequate

by David Thurman, Chairman, Board of Directors

We always knew that 2021 was going to be a critical year for Hippo Valley Christian Mission. Our managing director, Zebedee Togarepi, retired on December 31, 2020, meaning that this year would be one of transition with new people hired and some changing roles. To facilitate all of this change, Dr. Darel Pruett and his wife, Mary, volunteered to travel to Chiredzi, Zimbabwe, and oversee the transition. Darel, a retired dermatologist, grew up in Zimbabwe, as his parents began the medical ministry at Mashoko in 1956.

He serves as vice chairman of our board, and thoroughly understands the Zimbabwean culture and customs. Mary has a finance background and served as manager over Darel's practice for many years, making her the perfect person to analyze and streamline our finances. Darel and Mary made the trip to Zimbabwe in January, hit the ground running, and haven't stopped. Although Darel returned to the U.S. in mid-May, allowing him to attend our spring HVCM board meeting, Mary stayed for an additional six weeks to insure that needed changes are working as intended.

During his time in Chiredzi, Darel traveled to each of our schools – a mammoth task – accompanied by our new education secretary, Samuel Mahwehwe, to make introductions and inspect buildings. Physical concerns at some of our buildings were addressed, and at one school, Mukanga, a bore hole was installed, allowing them to have water for the first time in their fifty year history. Meanwhile, Darel also visited dozens of churches with Alone Gudyanga, who is overseeing church and medical evangelism, with similar assessments being made. He and Mary helped Mark and Meghan Burbidge transition into serving as managers at Chiredzi Christian Children's Village, and also helped us move our offices from the cramped space behind Chiredzi Christian Church, to a large building in town. An old warehouse, it was repainted and had some new

walls added to maximize the space. It includes an excellent conference room for meetings with preachers and headmasters.

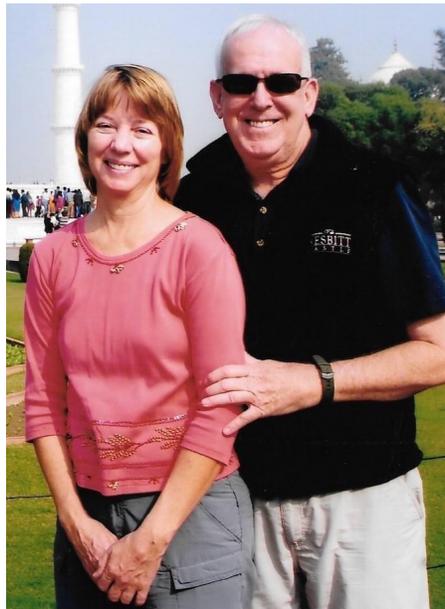
As a large, multi-faceted mission, we had opened numerous bank accounts over the years, and finances had become complex. Mary's hard work has streamlined all of this, enabling us to save money and have a higher level of accountability. She also repainted and refurbished our mission house in Chiredzi where teams stay, and served in other ways

too numerous to mention. Her energy, along with that of Darel, is truly amazing and together they exceeded our lofty expectations.

In a phone conversation with our US Director, Al Serhal, I teasingly said that when Darel and Mary went to Zimbabwe they had developed a more intricate plan than General George Patton had for the Battle of the Bulge. Of course they weren't going to make war, but rather, help HVCM position itself for the future. That mission has been accomplished with flying colors, and saying thank you does not seem sufficient for a couple who dedicated so much time and personal resources out of their love of Zimbabwe and its people. To put it in Shona, tatenda zvakanaka Darel and Mary!

Also, a big thank you to Bruce and Sherry Thacker, who used a sabbatical from ministry at Shelton Christian Church in Washington, to go to Zimbabwe, equipping and encouraging our preachers, while helping Alone in his new

role. And, board member Donna Stroop is currently in Chiredzi and will spend six weeks there this summer, further encouraging our staff and assisting as needed. I know she covets our prayers during this time. What exciting days for Hippo Valley, and how blessed we are to have so many faithful servants on both sides of the water! We are incredibly grateful to all for their sacrificial ministry.



Dr. Darel & Mary Pruett

24 Big Barrels

75 gallon barrels are large! Filling 24 of them just meant we were able to send much needed supplies to our staff in Zimbabwe. In February of this year, 24 barrels were stuffed full with books for Zimbabwe Christian College, keyboards, Living Proof t-shirts, lesson materials, crayons, toothbrushes, food pouches, men's suits and ladies dresses for the ZCC students, a plethora of yarn and knitting supplies, and even a few belated Christmas gifts for the Burbidges from their families back here.



The barrels were then shipped to Zimbabwe, and at the end of April they finally arrived - all completely unharmed. Praise the Lord! It was like Christmas morning for the staff to unpack each barrel.

Even Mary Pruett (*see below*) had to climb into the barrel to get to the bottom! Thank you to the many churches and individuals who supplied these resources and also donated toward the cost of shipping them. God provides through His people.



Chiredzi Christian Children's Village Renovation

By Mark & Meghan Burbidge, Co-Managers

These are exciting times at the Children's Village! We have made some major upgrades and changes here at the Village. The most exciting change for our kids has been the building of a new playground! We have an engineering intern from Spain that has been



spending his days and nights building this playground, together with our Village staff and kids. The playground is being built using mostly recycled materials and a lot of ingenuity. The Spanish intern's assistant and co-builder is a former Village child who has been trained in construction, so this has been a blessing and great experience

for him as well. The children are so excited to help in whatever way they are allowed, and we are confident that we will have the best playground in the area when we are finished.

There have also been improvements to the homes, such as ceiling fans in the bedrooms, additional tables for the younger kids, and TV's in each house. The other big focus for improvement has been on education. A lot of our children come to us way behind in school and often carry some form of trauma from their previous life situations. This gives us the task of trying to get them back on track and seeing the value of making education a priority. We were able to take advantage of the COVID lockdowns when school was not in session and our own staff did a lot of extra lessons with the kids. We have heard from their teachers that our village kids have made some big improvements.

Recently, we received a large book donation, which we have been distributing and getting the kids excited about. We are excited for the future and how we can continue to grow these precious children God has entrusted to us.

Living Proof Students Receive Backpacks!

By Rachel Eugene, Director of U.S. Operations

Despite unique challenges over the past year God has blessed us with unique opportunities. Thanks to our generous sponsors, we were able to provide a high quality Living Proof backpack to every Living Proof child! They are always so appreciative of their new uniform provided by their sponsor, but this was an extra unexpected treat. Many of the children were used to carrying their books long distances and are now so thankful for their new backpack. We appreciate you all for helping us make a difference in Zimbabwe.

