



# COMBINED CHRISTIAN MINISTRIES TO THE POOR

NPO Reg. - 046-047

21 May 2007

Hi all.



Sorry, I know it has been a while since you've heard from me but it has been busy! Needless to say, one of the bigger needs within CCMP at the moment is help with admin.

I have also attached copies of a project profile of the Ubomi Obutsha Centre that I have compiled which includes some info you have probably heard already and maybe some that you haven't. It's great for getting an overview picture of the project and if you can print on both sides of the paper with your printer, it prints into a nice little booklet. It is also a great tool to use if you would like to promote the ministry or motivate the involvement of groups, organise fund raisers, collections, etc.



I hope it paints a clearer picture for you of what you are supporting and that it will be a tool that you can really use.



Just to catch you up on some of what has been happening over the past while though . . .

Our new Centre Management Team is growing in its capacity to run the different activities at the Centre and is becoming increasingly proactive. We've still got a way to go but it's wonderful to see people develop and grow within themselves as they realise more and more what they are able to do!

I have had the opportunity of sharing what we are doing with two more congregations and two independent Christian associations who have begun to get involved. We are so grateful for all the donations of clothing, food, finance, school supplies, furniture, even windows and doors, etc, etc, that we are able to pass on to people who really need them and who are attending our programmes regularly and are working hard to make life a little better for themselves and their children.



Our food garden is doing very well. Over the past six weeks a combination of a refresher course with "Farming God's Way", donations of roughly 100tons topsoil, 23tons chicken manure (the community was understandably not too happy about that one!), 2 seasons worth of seed and fertiliser, 1½ thousand seedlings, the installation of "our" gate, the beginnings of a meaningful compost heap and the knowledgeable input of a "real" vegetable farmer has us very excited about the garden. Our last (& 1<sup>st</sup>) season was difficult for many reasons but we were able to harvest a fair

crop and so we are confident that this time around the harvest will be a lot better. We would like to see our garden develop to the point where it can be self sustaining as well as be able to supply the nutritional needs of so many people.

We have had some truly beneficial training for our Centre Management Team as part the Barnabas Trust Mentoring Program and the members of the community who come to the Centre have benefited greatly from social issues workshops, facilitated by CMR, running over 12 weeks.





Our teenager's library has had a mini makeover that now includes a few work tables for computers and a lounge area for meetings, etc. Our teenagers have also been rather active in helping CBO's in other poor communities run holiday clubs for their children. They are really doing so well!

We are becoming more and more concerned about the number of people who are dying from AIDS and TB and falling ill in the community around the Centre and the destitute children left in their wake! It is becoming quite common for us to have to rush someone to the local clinic or hospital because of their condition and then have to make sure that their children will be taken care of in the mean time! It becomes heartbreaking.



One of our greatest areas of need though is manpower when it comes to running Sunday School, the Junior Youth Club and the Teen Youth Club. Having the same few people do all three can be exhausting but we cannot quit the programs because they are too vital in the positive impact they have on the lives of the children who attend them. We really need small groups of people who can run with one of these programs for 6 or 12 months at a time. Can you help?

Two new activities which we are working on, and which will help close some gaps we have identified, are: 1) A community awareness program to keep the community informed on who we are, why we are there and the services we offer. 2) During the last school term of the year we wish to pilot an educare program for 2-6 year olds who are considered to be OVC's (Orphaned and Vulnerable Children) and from the homes we deal with. We're looking at working with just 10 children for the months of Oct. & Nov. '07 and then hopefully accommodate up to 30 in the new year. There is obviously a lot of planning, preparation and implementation that needs to go into these and we would welcome the assistance and support of anyone willing to give.

I have come to understand so much in so many new ways during my time out among the poor that I would like to share with you. Insights on the true nature of poverty and what our stance towards the poor really says about our stance towards God, but I think I've given you enough here already so maybe next time . . .



Blessings

Mark

**Matthew 7:21-29** (The Message) "Knowing the correct password—saying 'Master, Master,' for instance— isn't going to get you anywhere with me. What is required is serious obedience—doing what my Father wills. I can see it now—at the Final Judgment thousands strutting up to me and saying, 'Master, we preached the Message, we bashed the demons, our God-sponsored projects had everyone talking.' And do you know what I am going to say? 'You missed the boat. All you did was use me to make yourselves important. You don't impress me one bit. You're out of here.'"

"These words I speak to you are not incidental additions to your life, homeowner improvements to your standard of living. They are foundational words, words to build a life on. If you work these words into your life, you are like a smart carpenter who built his house on solid rock. Rain poured down, the river flooded, a tornado hit—but nothing moved that house. It was fixed to the rock.

"But if you just use my words in Bible studies and don't work them into your life, you are like a stupid carpenter who built his house on the sandy beach. When a storm rolled in and the waves came up, it collapsed like a house of cards."

When Jesus concluded his address, the crowd burst into applause. They had never heard teaching like this. It was apparent that he was living everything he was saying—quite a contrast to their religion teachers! This was the best teaching they had ever heard.

