



AN UPDATE LETTER FROM BEN FREETH, MCF EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR, IN ZIMBABWE

Dear Friends, Relations and Supporters

General: Things are coming to a head once more in Zimbabwe as the dysfunctional economy continues its sharply downward spiral. The government is struggling to pay civil servants. Army personnel are deserting. The ZiG (the new currency that the government claims is backed by gold (but which isn't backed by gold) is not in good shape. It was devalued by 43 percent against the US dollar in September!

Many wheat farmers have still not received payment from the state-owned Grain Marketing Board for their crops, making it impossible for them to service their debts.

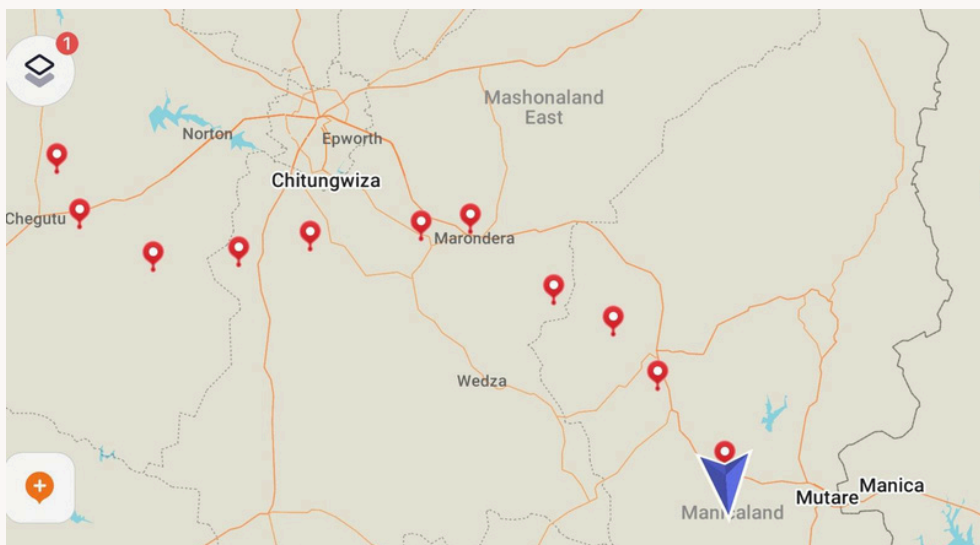


Parliament plunged into darkness by a power outage

When the lights went out in the new Chinese “donated” parliament building near Mount Hampden during the conclusion of the Finance Minister’s Budget 2025 speech on 29 November, that said it all! We hope and pray that this dire situation forces some sort of positive change.

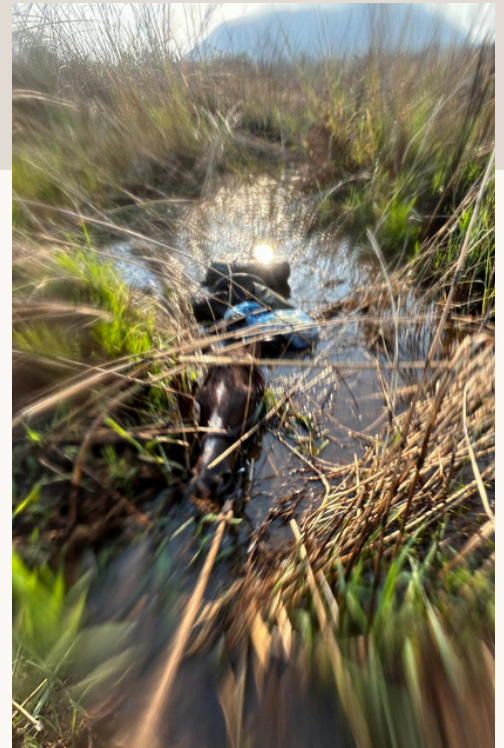
Long prayer walk/ride for justice:

I completed my prayer walk/ride across the eastern half of Zimbabwe during October with my horse, Tsedeq. Tsedeq and I have now walked from Mike Campbell’s Mount Carmel farm in the Chegutu district to the far west in Zimbabwe where the sun sets; and from Mount Carmel farm to the far east of the country where the sun rises. We have covered a full 1,200km together, and I prayed for the country and its struggling people along the way.



Our journey east from Mount Carmel farm near Chegutu to Mutare and the Vumba Mountains

The most desperate moment was when Tsedeq and I nearly drowned in a reed-tangled swamp. It was only by God's grace that we finally managed to get out. In a sense, there was something prophetic in what happened. If Tsedeq had died, it would almost have been as though the very concept of "Tsedeq" (justice and righteousness), had died in Zimbabwe. Thank God he didn't die; and thank God we still have hope in the resurgence of justice and righteousness in the future.



Struggling to get Tsedeq out of the reed-tangled swamp

SADC Tribunal:

We are yet to get any kind of response from the Southern African Development Community (SADC) Secretariat regarding my request for a meeting with the Executive Secretary or a senior member of their legal staff to discuss the urgent need to reinstate the regional court of justice, the SADC Tribunal, which was closed down in 2012 at the instigation of President Mugabe. It seems that they are in dereliction of their duty to do their job and protect the rule of law and democracy in the SADC region.



Our unacknowledged memorandum to the SADC Secretariat calling for the Tribunal to be reinstated

We are now looking at other ways of trying to compel the Secretariat to conform to the SADC Treaty of 1992 which established the SADC Tribunal to adjudicate disputes and ensure adherence to the Treaty. The prayer that I posted on the door of the former seat of the SADC Tribunal after my long ride/walk to Windhoek in Namibia, which I completed on 18 March this year, still remains on the door.



Seed Project:

Planting has been completed for our next open-pollinated seed project crop. The electricity supply is unfortunately now worse than it has ever been. This means that pumping water for irrigation is very difficult. The rain has been worryingly patchy so far - and it has been exceptionally hot with temperatures close to 40 degrees centigrade. If the country is to have another drought on top of last year's severe El Niño drought, the situation will become even more dire in the absence of being able to irrigate effectively due to the electricity shortages.

Our OPV seed crop already growing well in December last year

Please can we join together and pray for rain. The seed project is needed more than ever to supply small-scale farmers with open-pollinated maize seed to grow for their families. More than 20,000 families have planted the seed we gave them this season and they are encouraged to use our practical conservation agriculture methods which require less water and protect the soil from drying out.



Delighted beneficiaries of our OPV seed packs in November 2024



Early days for these enthusiastic children at Tegatega Christian School near Chegutu

Our school project:

We are pleased to announce that the small new school we support on the outskirts of Chegutu is progressing well. It's such a blessing to visit the school and see children who would otherwise not be in school, happy and learning. I was shocked on my long walk/ride for justice to see how many children in Zimbabwe are no longer being educated and how few of them now can even speak any English.

Once again we would like to thank all our wonderful supporters for your continued encouragement and support. We could not do all our work – and achieve our successful initiatives – without you.

Your continued support in kind and in prayer in 2025 would be greatly appreciated.

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Ben Freeth'.

Ben Freeth

Executive Director

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"What does the Lord require of you? To act justly, to love mercy and to walk humbly with your God." Micah 6:8

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