

ARTPEACE AND FRIENDS

A DOUBLE WHAMMY: Hours from taking office, President Trump's order to freeze US foreign aid for review after 90 days has intensified humanitarian crises and raised profound questions about America's reliability and global standing. Verity, my CAFOD Head of Region Africa contact said: 'Zimbabwe will be affected – the US funds a lot of the HIV work here. People will die and organisations will close within that 90 days'. Fortune said: 'The medication which keeps me alive has already been reduced'. To make matters worse, ZANU PF, the ruling party have intensified calls for the extension of President Mnangagwa's two-term tenure, due to end in 2028 by postponing elections or amending the Constitution. This move to get President Emerson Mnagagwa to extend his stay in power beyond 2028 is from 'sinister self-serving motives,' according to the Secretary General of the Zimbabwe Catholic Bishops' Conference.'

READERS at times may wonder if our support over so many years to these beleaguered artists makes much difference but it truly does lift heart and soul. Last month I covered some initiatives and progress. A few members may recall the halcyon days of 2010 when exhibitions of their work in United Reformed Churches across the country raised considerable sums of money. A handful of artists prudently managed to buy small 'stands' – plots of land to build a home. It has taken many painstaking years to buy materials. E.G. Coster's family lived in the rented ruin (left) with



cracks in walls and holes in roof, fit only for demolition - no toilet, running water or electricity. When it rained, life became miserable. Coster made a start



on a new house moulding hundreds of bricks from mud (above) which over ten years later is now taking shape! However, the metal roofed, single skin walls minus ceilings await plastering - the



floor is earthen with no windows, doors or any facilities so he still has several years to scrimp and save to finalise the build. However, eventually it will be his own home, saving on rent offering dry living conditions for **fifteen people!** Emma his wife and 3 children (below left), have already moved in along with a bullfrog! So when you donate or buy a piece from Artpeace and friends, dear readers, many men, women and children will benefit. Coster's maize field on the right is also flourishing so he is a happy man at present thanks to your support.



BAPTISM: Some readers may have seen the video sent by artist Lovemore on St Andrew's Facebook page or clicked on our Editor's accompanying GV email. He said: ['Sixty eight of my](#)



Apostolic Church congregation held an all-night prayer vigil on top of a holy mountain in Goromonzi called 'Mountain of Results' named by early missionaries. It has powers from the ancestral spirits of the region. The following morning, some of the congregation were baptised under a waterfall called Shayanhowe. Our singing warns each person by name who was baptised and had repented, not to go back to old unchristian behaviour and to follow the word of God'.

IT'S A BUSY TIME for our friends trying to make ends meet in a country with the highest rate of inflation in the world according to the IMF - **a staggering 465%!** Spare moments are spent sculpting and a family visiting Zimbabwe in April should clear the parcel backlog. Godwin's leopards are popular so I hope they have room in their suitcases to take these two beauties back!



GODFREY, one of our best artists whose hands are now crippled with arthritis, struggles to carve. He proudly informs me that thanks to our support he was able to cover his daughter Rutendo's Spring term school fees and new uniform. 14 years old Rutendo (meaning thankful to the Almighty) has ambitions to become a nurse. Message from Rutendo: ['Hi to all our friends in the UK. I'm Rutendo William and a second year student at Glen Norah secondary school in Harare. My father Godfrey William showed me a nice message that I will be added to the church magazine. I was much touched with the opportunity that I will be seen by friends around the world. Donations sent to my father are really helpful with my fees and school stationery and food. I'm so grateful that some kind people give us a helping hand. May God bless you for being kind not only to my father but to all of us because this money is also shared with our extended families and friends. Please keep on with your kind support as these donations mean a lot to us and it goes a long way. Thank you so much. Rutendo'](#). And finally a big thank you to those members and friends who generously donated last month. As ever, the money sent direct to the artists was received within 48 hours.



Johnston Simpson