

From Ted Warnock, Missionary for Special Projects, UMCOR – On assignment in South Africa

There are currently over eight Hundred (800) men, women, and children that huddle next to each other (every evening) at the Central Methodist Church to find a warm place to sleep. In these difficult times, this church and their Bishop have transformed their place of worship into a sanctuary for those who do not have a place to stay and a place to be protected from the struggles that the community imposes upon refugees trying to find a home. These refugees are from numerous countries, but there seems to be a predominance of people from Zimbabwe.

varnish, repair of broken windows, repair of kitchen appliances, cement, calk, and books.

“Ask and you will receive...” Roxane Richter and Dr. Tom Flowers (representing World Missions Possible, a non-profit organization located in Texas) traveled to South Africa to provide medical care and assist during the Xenophobic crisis. Dr. Flowers could not get his medical credentials certified within the time-frame necessary to provide medical care. SO, they asked “how can we help?” They were informed of the school and their needs. They



This update is not about the Central Methodist Church. Rather, it is about the educational needs of the refugees. To be certain, Bishop Paul Verryn and the Central Methodist Church have been a driving force in its creation. However, now that Bishop Verryn has blessed its opening, the work, and the seemingly overwhelming obstacles to start a school have started.

At the opening of the school, there were 55 refugee children in attendance. There are now 60. Of the original class, there were only four (4) parents that could actually claim their children - the rest are orphans within the mass of refugees that stay at the Central Methodist Church during the evening hours.

The Albert Methodist Church in Johannesburg, SA (location of the school) was once called the St Paul's School until it was shut down by the Apartheid Government in 1958. Now, with this renewal of life, the school will be led by Refugee teachers and administrators from Zimbabwe – many of whom fled for their lives during the political unrest in their home country.

Among the immediate needs identified by the school are: blackboards, school desks, tables, cabinets, shelves, paint,

provided three metal tables, a financial gift, and paint to re-surface the blackboards.

With the assistance of Richard Bosart (South African Methodist Volunteers in Mission – SAMVIM), contact was made with Rotary International's local District in Bedfordview (Johannesburg, SA area) that has a warehouse of educational books and school supplies free to assist in the literacy and education of children. William Kandowe (who will be the administrator of the school), and two other teachers personally picked out 589 books. All the books were donated free.

This Saturday, my hosts in SA (Barry Mey and his oldest son Matthew) and I will build two book shelves to hold many of these class books.

I look forward to sharing more about William Kandowe's (his escape from Zimbabwe) and how God has placed him at this school.

