

## A reflection on Zimbabwe

led by MU members Jenny Thorne and Heather Shackleton

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## THE STORY OF ZIMBABWE

The name Zimbabwe (derived from the Shona words dzimba dza mabwe) means 'house of stones' and one of Zimbabwe's impressive historical sites is the monument of the Great Zimbabwe, stone structures of granite, built with great masonry expertise about 900 years ago. It is thought to have been the capital of the Empire which lasted from 1220 to 1450. There is evidence of a sophisticated civilisation, trading in cattle, ivory and gold. The ruler Munhumutapa was the first to trade with the first Europeans to arrive (the Portuguese).

In the 1890s Cecil John Rhodes arrived to exploit the region's mineral wealth with his British South Africa Company. He was also responsible for colonising the area that became Southern Rhodesia. During this period there was a systematic purge of the indigenous population in order to dispossess them of their land and its rich natural resources. The independence of Zimbabwe came at a huge price as thousands of lives were lost when people rose against the colonisers. Resistance to colonial rule continued until mass nationalism began to take shape in the 1960s. In 1965 the then Prime Minister, Ian Smith, unilaterally declared independence under white minority rule, because Britain refused to grant Rhodesia independence until it introduced black majority rule. From 1960 to 1979 there were many influential nationalists including Joshua Nkomo, and Robert Mugabe. In 1979 Ian Smith formed a unity government with the African National Council, and the country was christened Zimbabwe-Rhodesia.

## Introduction - Zimbabwe National Anthem

### PRAYER OF PRAISE

- Jenny: God of Peace and freedom, we welcome you in our midst.  
Heather: We praise you for your love which surpasses all understanding.  
Jenny: We praise you for who you are - now and forever.  
**ALL: YOU ARE AN AMAZING GOD**  
Jenny: Creator God, we praise you for the natural resources we are called to care for: the vegetation, minerals, endangered animals, waterfall and forests.  
**ALL: YOU ARE A GRACIOUS GOD**  
Heather: Jesus, we praise you for the gift of respect, for the dignity of human life, for the love of one another and for the friendliness of Zimbabwe's hard working people.  
**ALL: YOU ARE THE BREAD OF LIFE**  
Jenny: Holy Spirit, we praise you for enabling us to gather in prayer and worship with the people of Zimbabwe and around the world.  
**ALL: YOU ARE THE SPIRIT OF TRUTH. YOU UNIFY US IN PRAYERS AND ACTION.**

### SONG: LET US PRAISE GOD TOGETHER

Let us praise God together, let us praise;  
Let us praise God together all our days:  
He is faithful in all ways,  
He is worthy of our praise, his name be exalted on high.

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Let us seek God together, let us pray;  
Let us seek his forgiveness as we pray:  
He will cleanse us from all sin,  
He will help us the fight to win,  
His name be exalted on high.

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Let us serve God together, him obey;  
Let our lives show his goodness through each day:  
Christ Lord is the world's true light -  
let us serve Him with all our might,  
his name be exalted on high!

**Heather:** A LETTER FROM THE WOMEN OF ZIMBABWE (WDP 2020)  
"Friends, in the path for justice, let us reflect and place before God our stories for the world. Our people are diverse and have a long history. From the Great Zimbabwe Empire to today there are many stories to tell. We have fought for independence from colonial power and for the formation of a national government led by leaders supported by the majority of the population. However, we have faced political violence during past elections. Efforts to bring all sides into the process of truth and reconciliation are taking longer than most people had hoped. The traumas imposed by the armed conflicts are still affecting Zimbabwean society."

**INSTRUMENTAL : LET THERE BE LOVE**

**Reflection on Zimbabwe led by Jenny & Heather**

**PRAYERS OF THANKSGIVING AND INTERCESSION - Heather**

Let us join together with the peoples of Zimbabwe and around the world to give thanks to God. Let us walk in Jesus' unconditional love.

**ALL: FROM OUR CORNER OF THE WORLD, WE THANK YOU.**

We pray that you continue to bless us with the gift of life and protection. For the seasons that enable us to grow food enough to feed our families and to share with our neighbours in need.

**ALL: WE THANK YOU, WE ARE ALL CARETAKERS OF GOD'S CREATION.**

We pray for our brothers and sisters who have been forced to leave their homeland and become migrants or refugees. Show us all how we can effectively and compassionately help them.

**ALL: HELP US TO LOVE ONE ANOTHER.**

We pray for communities and individuals around the world who live in fear of violence both in their families and in their nation.

**ALL: GIVE US WISDOM AND GRACE TO BE PEACEMAKERS.**

We thank you for the courageous and pioneering women throughout the ages. We remember our Mothers' Union founder Mary Sumner and the worldwide organisation she inspired. We thank you for the hard-working women of Zimbabwe who compiled the 2020 World Day of Prayer which has given us valuable insight into their daily lives and struggles in that country. For the encouragement they give to their communities to pray, love and forgive.

**ALL: MAY WE CARRY ON THE LEGACY OF COURAGEOUS WOMEN IN OUR COMMUNITIES.**

We think of our MU branch and members worldwide .....

**ALL SAY TOGETHER - The Knots Prayer**

Dear God: Please untie the knots  
that are in my mind,  
my heart and my life.  
Remove the have nots,  
the can nots and the do nots  
that I have in my mind.  
Erase the will nots,  
may nots,  
might nots that may find  
a home in my heart.  
Release me from the could nots,  
would nots and  
should nots that obstruct my life.  
And most of all,  
Dear God,  
I ask that you remove from my mind,  
my heart and my life all of the 'am nots'  
that I have allowed to hold me back,  
especially the thought  
that I am not good enough. AMEN

**Jenny:** Conclusion - Zimbabwe and Mothers Union at work

**ALL SAY MOTHERS' UNION PRAYER**

Loving Lord,  
We thank you for your love so freely given to us all.  
We pray for families around the world.  
Bless the work of the Mothers' Union as we seek to share your love  
through the encouragement, strengthening and support of marriage and  
family life.  
Empowered by your Spirit, may we be united in prayer and worship, and in  
love and service reach out as your hands across the world.  
In Jesus' name. Amen

Finally we listen to a modern Zimbabwean Hymn

Join us now for a taste of some traditional Zimbabwean cake and drink plus a few 'Facts about women in Zimbabwe' quiz.