

Dark Zimbabwe Prisons See Gospel Light

Three years ago, the Zimbabwe Association for Crime Prevention and Rehabilitation of the Offender, or ZACRO, released a report noting that there are 55 prisons in Zimbabwe.

Although capacity was maxed at 17,000 inmates, a rough count showed more than twice that number in the jails. Conditions in the facilities are dire. The report noted extreme hunger, inhumane squalid conditions, exposure to a variety of diseases, with conditions unlikely to have changed since 2008.

Against that backdrop, Biblica has been bringing hope. Because prisoners need to experience the freedom that comes from knowing Jesus Christ as their Savior, Biblica Zimbabwe plans to partner with church groups to share the gospel message with 1,000 prisoners, using the booklet *Tariro Yavasungwa* (Hope for Prisoners, Shona).

Statistics show that prisoners who make a commitment to Christ are less likely to reoffend. Biblica's "Free on the Inside Bible" contains notes of encouragement and counsel on following Christ, even in a prison cell. More than 1 million inmates have received this much-loved Bible; the standard Shona translation was completed in 2005.

Biblica Africa serves the African Church by partnering with local churches and ministries to provide the Bible and biblical resources in vernacular languages. This year, they're hoping to serve people in the Democratic Republic of Congo, Ethiopia, Ghana, Kenya, Malawi, Nigeria, Senegal, South Africa, South Sudan, Uganda and Zimbabwe, and will continue work on 10 Bible translations.

Biblica Africa will also help the untrained volunteers that make up the bulk of Sunday School teachers and lay leaders of

the local church bodies who work with projects like the inmate outreaches. Biblica Zimbabwe plans to provide training materials and one-day seminars each month, training 500 teachers this year. The goal is for these participants to then train other teachers to bring children to Christ and nurture their spiritual growth.