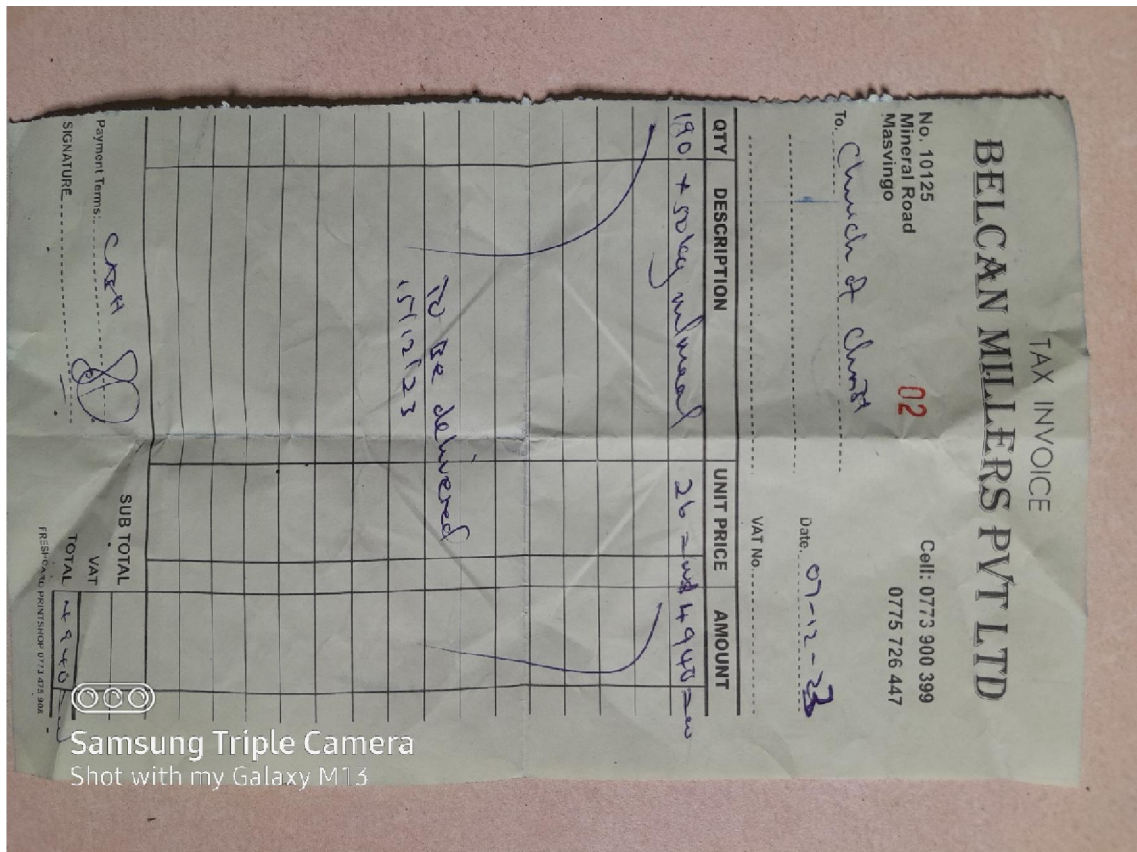


Greetings to you Brethren. I hope that this email finds you doing well. I am glad to present the following report of how the relief funds KSR sent recently were used. There is an ongoing confusion in terms of prices especially of mealie meal. I will give you a bit of background that may help you understand the situation. Grain Marketing Board (GMB) is a parastatal wholly controlled by the Government. It buys all grains grown by both small scale and large-scale farmers. The main grains they stock are maize, wheat, rice and many more. The Government made a law which forbids all grain producers to sell their maize to private buyers except to GMB. Farmers on the other hand prefer to sell their grains to private buyers because if you deliver to GMB, you are never paid on time. Usually, a year can lapse from the day of delivery until one is finally paid. When they are finally paid, the Government pays in local currency which loses value every day. If one sells to private buyers, they get paid in United States dollar which is a stable currency but you risk having your grains forfeited to the state if you are caught selling to private buyers.

Nearly three weeks ago, the Zimbabwe Minister of Finance announced a 2024 budget wherein he announced a raft of many increases in various taxes on certain food items and fuel that are kicking in on the first of January 2024. This has caused some panic across all sectors of the economy. GMB which is supposed to sell maize to the maize millers has stopped giving them maize. The main reason we are told is that the Government wants to conserve maize for the forecasted drought period next year due to effects of El Nino. This has created a shortage of maize. Our mealie meal supplier like all other millers is also affected by this non availability of maize from GMB. The only option available to the millers is to look for the maize from private people even though it is illegal to do so. This in turn has caused the prices to soar because of high demand but less supply. We continue watching the market to see what will happen going forward particularly into 2024.

When I received the funds (**\$5400**), the supplier demanded payment upfront which he has never done before. He was only supplying paid up orders because there was no maize. He wanted to use our money to run around and sourcing maize from wherever he could get it. He came all the way to Bulawayo 300 kilometres from Masvingo where he is based to collect the cash on the 7<sup>th</sup> of December. You may wonder why I did not just put the money into his bank for him to access it in Masvingo. When you have a banking sector that is not able to offer such a basic service to its clientele, you can see a glimpse of how Zimbabwe economy is. United States dollar is so precious in Zimbabwe that whoever has it in the pocket will spend it from the pocket. If you bank it, it will be very difficult to get it back from the bank. His price on the day of collecting the money was \$26 per 50kg bag up from \$22.50 in October. This was a big jump. Attached underneath is the invoice.



On Wednesday at 5am, Nothando and myself left Bulawayo going to the rural areas ahead of distributing the mealie meal. We passed through Bera area where a class had been arranged with brethren from Bera, Ruware and Chenhare at Ruware building. I was teaching "Sermon on the mount" from Matthew 5,6 and 7. More on this in my monthly report. The next morning, I was starting a study of Exodus at Chinhuwa. More on this in my monthly report.

At 1pm after the study at Chinhuwa, the truck carrying the mealie meal arrived at Chinhuwa building. The sky was overcast and before we could offload the portion for Chinhuwa, it rained "cats and dogs" for over thirty minutes. We could not do anything. Even the offloading stopped half way through. Luckily, the lorry had a tarpaulin which safely protected the mealie meal from being rain soaked. The following are pictures of the rains I captured through the window from inside the building.





When the rains subsided, we offloaded the remaining bags but it was so muddy to place them outside the building. We squeezed everything and everyone inside the building as the following picture will show.



Immediately, we left to Bera 60 kilometres away. We offloaded first at Chenhare collection point, then at Bera and finally Ruware as shown by the following three pictures respectively.



Samsung Triple Camera  
Shot with my Galaxy M13



Samsung Triple Camera  
Shot with my Galaxy M13



### Summary

- Because of the price hike, we purchased 190x50kg bags as opposed to 200 bags in October. The consignment cost **\$4940** as opposed to **\$4500** in October.
- Chinhuwa got 51 bags, Chenhare got 66, Bera 34 and Ruware 39
- Money received was \$5400
- change after paying the consignment was \$460 which took care of my fuel and the lorry charges.
- This time we did not have any offloading charges since brethren did the job themselves at every place. Also, there is no medical bill that was paid unlike in October.

The funds were just sufficient and everyone who deserved to get mealie meal got it. Some get disqualified if their attendance is erratic. The next supply will be needed after end of February 2024. By then we hope that the prices will have stabilized. I will continue giving you updates towards the time. For about a week now, the rains are pounding. People, brethren included are tilling their lands. Unfortunately planting season is a marathon. The rains will be needed throughout the season. If there is any break in the middle of the season crops can be written off. The Government continues to urge people to brace for a drought spell because of the El Nino which is predicted to affect Southern African nations including Zimbabwe. God ultimately has the real knowledge of the future. We trust in His judgement.

The brethren are thankful. They asked me to convey their gritudes.

Your brother

Professor