

Monday, May 21, 2001

Dear Friends,

On Monday, April 30, 2001, *The Washington Post* reported on one of the greatest tragedies facing the global community today. Over three million persons, mostly civilians, have been killed in the Congo War. As the war, starvation, disease, and carnage continue at this very moment, the Cooperative Baptist Fellowship (CBF) is seeking to help bring an end to this conflict as well as to other conflicts in the region.

Working in partnership with Africans and the African church, CBF is planning a conference in [Zimbabwe](#). The objectives of this conference is to create a system to alert Africans to conflict at an early stage; to involve churches through multiple mechanisms communicating on the local, national and regional (intercontinental) levels; and to create a regional rapid response team to diffuse conflict before disagreement escalates into violence. The conference will concentrate on the specific peacekeeping needs of Southern Africa. CBF believes in the power of these churches to make a difference for three reasons: churches in these regions are omnipresent, churches play a significant role in shaping the thinking and behavior of their congregations, and churches are able to transcend the national, racial, and ethnic boundaries that so often muddle peacekeeping efforts.

These churches, their leaders, and leaders from many regional church associations will meet in [Harare, Zimbabwe on October 16-18](#). Unlike the image sometimes portrayed in news media, these conferences will confront difficult and stark realities of people's daily lives, desperate needs, hard struggles, and, most of all, their hopes.

CBF is dedicated to seeing this ecumenical conference become a reality, but we cannot do this alone. The Cooperative Baptist Fellowship has committed USD \$25,000 to this conference. We need your help to raise an additional USD \$30,000 to make this vision a success. Your donations will assure that our African brothers and sisters can attend this meeting, as air travel within the continent of Africa is rather expensive.

Your support will guarantee that our brothers and sisters in Christ will be able to sit at the table with others who equally hope for a more peaceful future. If you are interested in learning more about the conference, please see the enclosed proposals or contact any of the individuals listed at the bottom of the enclosure. Donations can be sent to CBF c/o Ben Bryant, P.O. Box 450329, Atlanta, GA 31145-0329. Please mark your check "Mobilizing the African Church in Conflict Prevention," placing the following number on the memo line: 80321-42050. May it never be said that we as Christians abandoned the opportunity to better the lives of those around us, both near and far; may it always be said that we seized every chance to make this world a better place. Thank you for your time and support.

Shalom,

Lonnie and Fran Turner, Washington, D.C. USA
Ben Bryant, Atlanta, GA USA
Sabrina Neff, Washington, D.C. USA
Tendai Chikuku, Harare, Zimbabwe
David Modiega, Gaborone, Botswana