



Book Review:

Out of the Black Shadows

by Stephen Lungu (with Anne Coombes)

Out of the Black Shadows is the true story of Stephen Lungu - a child born into an unhappy and abusive home in Zimbabwe. His teenage Mother was very unhappy. Often beaten by her husband, she could not cope with Stephen and his younger brother and sister. One day when Stephen was 7 years old she took the three of them to a nearby town square and thrusting the baby girl into Stephen's arms walked away and did not return. Police found them crying and distressed and they were eventually sent to some Aunts who definitely did not want to be saddled with extra children when they could barely cope with their own families. Stephen in particular was badly treated and his heart became more and more angry and bitter. By the time he was 11 years old he had run away from the only place he could call home and spent his nights sleeping under bridges and his days scavenging for food from dust bins.

Stephen and other boys in similar situations joined forces and formed a gang called the 'The Black Shadows'. They found companionship, acceptance and support in the gang. Others joined and their aim was to be as brutal as possible. One day they found out that a Christian Mission was to be held in the area and decided to disrupt it by throwing a few petrol bombs into the congregation! Fortunately the bombs never did reach their target.

The boys arrived a little earlier than the time planned and Stephen began to listen as a young girl told the story of how Jesus had changed her life. He stayed to hear more and what followed was more amazing than fiction!

This book can be borrowed from the Surfside library.

Reviewed by Shirley Peart