

# SIM now

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**SIM**  
SOUTHERN AFRICA

## The LIGHT of the world has come!

You know that Christmas is just around the corner when you go to shopping malls and centres and see Christmas decorations. The world's agenda is to put Christ out of the picture at this time of year by not even mentioning the word Christmas but rather calling it the 'Festive Season'. For us Christians, Christmas is a reminder of the "One and Only" whom John spoke about when he said "The Word became flesh and made His dwellings among us. We have seen His glory, the glory of the One and Only, who came from the Father, full of grace and truth" (John 1:14).



Jesus Himself declared "...I am the light of the world..." (John 8:12). The question is what does "Jesus is the Light of the world" mean, especially when it seems that a dark cloud is hanging over the world?

One way or other the articles featured in this issue of SIMNow help us to see how Jesus is the Light of the world. You will see how God is working through His servants: those missionaries involved with Ebola, those who love and care for children, those with a passion to reach out to the students at the universities and those mobilizing the church to reach out to their 'other religion' neighbours. Lastly we see how He helps us to remain faithful in the midst of all the different kinds of challenges we face.

This year has been a tough year on many fronts: The ISIS movement killing hundreds of Christians, the Gaza Strip war taking many innocent lives, teenage girls abducted in Nigeria and here in South Africa children's lives being taken mercilessly – to mention a few. Almost the whole world is locked in deadly struggle, and with the most terrible weapons which science can devise, the nations advance upon each other. There is genuine pain and suffering in this world caused by sin and the lack of "the fear of the Lord which is the beginning of true

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wisdom".

In declaring Himself to be the Light of the world, Jesus is claiming that He is the exclusive source of spiritual light. No other source of spiritual truth is available to mankind. When you come into a dark room, you know where the switch is, that when it is turned on, dispels the darkness. Likewise, the Light of Jesus Christ has to be taken into the darkness of sin that engulfs the world and hearts and lives of those who are not following Him.

May we be true witnesses of the 'Light' this Christmas. It is my prayer that you continue to find peace, joy and happiness as we celebrate the coming of the King.

Siegfried Ngubane

### Cover Art for Ebola "Restore Us O God"

Can art help stop a deadly virus? I believe it can.

This past summer my husband, Robert, was called into an emergency meeting regarding a number of SIM missionaries working in Liberia. The Ebola outbreak in West Africa had infected two American missionaries working at ELWA Hospital. As the week's events unfolded, I watched, read and prayed, asking God if there was a way to do something.

As I sat pondering this on the last day of July, I realized I could do something: I could make art to raise awareness and support for the efforts to contain Ebola in West Africa.

"Restore Us, O God," takes its title from the prayer in Psalm 80. It features three kneeling figures, raising flags in prayer. The three flags are of the primarily affected countries of Guinea, Liberia, and Sierra Leone. Beams of coloured shapes stream down, representing God's work to heal the people and the land. The finished piece is a reminder to lift up the people of West Africa in prayer until this virus is stopped.

Rachel Bogan

Find out more about this artwork at: <http://www.rachelfinder.com/artforebola>

Rachel Bogan is a former SIM missionary, living and making art in Denver, Colorado, USA.

# Learn to Teach English

A new course soon to start at Cornerstone Institute

by Sandy Willcox

Puzzled? - find the acronym in the text.

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Try this quiz. True or False

- **Most English second language teachers in the world have English as their mother tongue.**
- **Correct English is determined by the queen (of England).**
- **Basic English is very difficult to learn.**
- **Creative access countries do not want Christian teachers.**

All of the above are false. The majority of English teachers in the world have *English as their second language (L2)*. It is now widely accepted that there are many 'Englishes' including a form of English called *English as a Lingua Franca*, which is developing its own rules. Basic English is relatively easy. With 1000 words and an understanding of the simple tenses it is possible to be understood. It is advanced English that gets complicated. For example who would have thought that you could cut a tree down then cut it up? Many countries, while forbidding proselytising, welcome Christians because they have developed a reputation for honesty, integrity, hard work and love for their students. There is one country for example that forbids entry by atheists and Jews but anyone else is welcome.

Language is an integral part of who we are as humans. It makes us different from the rest of creation, enables us to have relationships and reflects the character of God Himself. For this reason teaching language is always a ministry in its own right. Even in situations where it is 'impossible' to share your faith it is always possible and good teaching practice to share who you are. Teaching English is relational and facilitates discussion about life questions.

Teachers often have what I call 'bubble popping moments' I had one recently when we were discussing contrastive rhetoric – yes really! We unpacked the concept of presenting ideas using different forms that are unique to different cultures and languages. At the end of the discussion the students asked me to tell them what style they used. My answer was first that that was their job to analyse their own language and culture and second that

the idea that English had to conform to Greek linear style is one that I do not think is valid. I had just disagreed publicly with a world expert on the subject and I could see the startled amazement in my students' eyes. They were taught never to disagree – never ever with someone in authority and their new teacher had just popped the bubble.

Because English is such a strategic ministry a *TESOL (Teaching English to Speakers of Other Languages)* teacher training course is to be set up at Cornerstone Institute in Salt River, Cape Town starting in 2015. It will be possible to take courses as part of a BA or a BTh or just do the TESOL and get a certificate of completion. It carries NQF level 5 and 6 accreditation. Capetonians might like to consider signing up or encouraging someone in their church to sign up. Churches might like to train someone to teach English in order to reach out to international communities on our doorstep or help disadvantaged school children improve their language skills. For more details see the Cornerstone Institute web site at [www.cornerstone.ac.za](http://www.cornerstone.ac.za). ■

Sandy Willcox and students at Cornerstone Institute





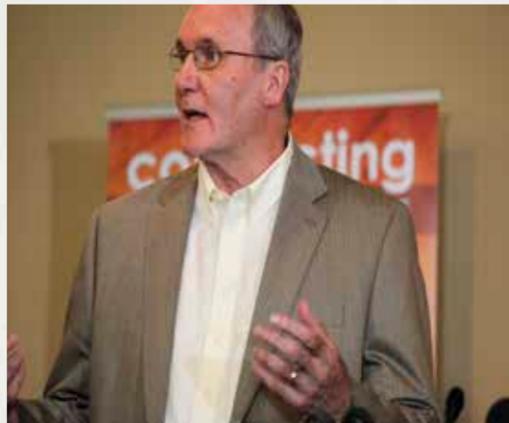
## “It was a joy to serve at ELWA Hospital” Battling Ebola in Liberia

By Suzanne Green, United Kingdom

### ELWA Fights Ebola

According to the World Health Organization (WHO), the current Ebola outbreak in West Africa is the largest and most complex one since the virus was discovered more than 40 years ago. WHO has declared it an “international health emergency” and “more deadly than all previous outbreaks of the disease combined.” In Liberia, which seems to be worst hit and where SIM’s ELWA Hospital has been fighting the virus since June, a number of factors have contributed to this bleak assessment.

“Although there have been great efforts to educate and inform the population, including by our own ELWA Radio, the general view has been that Ebola does not exist,” says Will Elphick, SIM’s Liberia Director. “Many think of it as something the Government has made up to generate funds from international organizations, or else the result of a curse – and therefore, only overcome with prayer.” Adding to the chaos caused by fear and ignorance is the poor state of the health care system in Liberia. Before Ebola began attacking health workers, there was just one doctor per 100,000 people. Now many of those seeking to combat the disease have died. Others have left their posts due to fear. One by one the country’s hospitals have closed their doors.



Despite these challenges, ELWA Hospital has done its best to fight the virus. “Back in February we heard that cases of Ebola had been diagnosed in Guinea,” Elphick comments. “We decided to prepare for what could be the worst. So we relocated two families with young children, whose ministries were in the North of the country, on the Guinea border. And doctors at ELWA Hospital began to prepare for the possibility of Ebola arriving in Monrovia.

“Dr. Debbie Eisenhut researched the virus and set up a training programme for ELWA staff. With advice from Doctors Without Borders, an Ebola Case Management Centre was set up in the ELWA chapel, and a very careful system for triaging patients was put in place to keep everyone safe.”

When Ebola patients began to arrive in Monrovia in April, SIM decided to relocate families serving in Liberia. Only those directly involved in managing the outbreak remained in the country. “In May, 42 days after the last case was confirmed in Liberia, we thought the scare was over,” Elphick explains. “No patients had arrived at ELWA yet. Some of our evacuated personnel returned, and my wife Jenny and I left for home assignment in the UK.”

But by June Ebola was affecting Sierra Leone. A woman who had attended a funeral in that country

arrived back in Monrovia, bringing the virus with her. So began the second wave of Ebola in Liberia. On June 12 ELWA Hospital’s first two Ebola patients arrived. Sadly, one had died in the ambulance on the way there. This time the virus spread quickly throughout the capital, and it soon became clear that the hospital’s five-bed Ebola ward was not big enough.



Nancy Writebol and Dr. Kent Brantly

With the help of Samaritan’s Purse, SIM Liberia set up a bigger Case Management Centre with room for 25 beds. By July 20 it was ready to receive patients, and before long the SIM team of doctors was working round the clock. They learned that, although there is no cure for Ebola, early identification, continuous hydration and good nutrition all help patients to develop their own immunity to the virus. But during these early days there was not much success; most cases resulted in death.

### Christ’s love and compassion

ELWA Hospital continues to battle Ebola, but more personnel and equipment are needed if it is to be contained. Currently more than 3,000 people in West Africa have been killed by the disease, 2,000 of these in Liberia. And WHO warns that there may be as many as 20,000 cases in the region by November if the outbreak is not brought under control.

Since the early days of the Church, Christians have selflessly looked to the medical needs of others – often at great personal risk. Jesus taught us to pray for and minister to the sick. And telling those who “live and die without ever hearing the Good News” about Christ’s love and his power to save is SIM’s reason for being: our heartbeat.

Nancy Writebol reflected this when she addressed the media at a SIM USA press conference held September 3. “I had no clue what was going to happen to me. Of course, I knew what the outcome could be. And yet there was no fear – there was just this sense of the Lord’s presence with us. And I thought, whether I live or whether I die, it’s going to be OK ... It was a joy to serve at ELWA and I thank the Lord for giving me the opportunity.”

As Ebola continues to decimate West Africa, and hundreds continue to die without ever hearing the gospel, may we respond with Christ’s love and compassion, employing all of the resources He puts in our hands. ■

### PRAY:

- For continued restoration and recovery for Dr. Rick Sacra, who was declared virus-free following treatment at the Nebraska Medical Center in Omaha, Nebraska, USA. Rick, who was diagnosed with Ebola on September 1, contracted the disease while working in obstetrics, not the Ebola unit, at ELWA Hospital.
- For the people of Liberia and other parts of West Africa who are fighting Ebola, often without adequate resources. Ask God to strengthen international response to this threat.
- For God’s protection for missionaries and Liberian staff at ELWA Hospital and ELWA Radio as they work to save lives and educate people about Ebola.

### GIVE: Project no. 95217. Help us:

- Provide needed equipment and PPE for ELWA Hospital
- Pay salaries of medical and radio staff
- Provide fuel for generators to provide power to the Ebola Units and Hospital
- Deal with future emergencies

### GO:

We are eager to see experienced medical/health personnel join our Liberian staff at ELWA Hospital. Those interested in working at the Ebola Management Centre should contact Medecins Sans Frontieres (Doctors Without Borders) as they lead in the effort to fight Ebola in Liberia and across West Africa.

# Lambano

By Megan Allmon

Mark 9:36-37 “And He took a child and put him in the midst of them, and taking him in His arms, He said to them, “Whoever receives one such child in My name receives Me, and whoever receives Me, receives not Me but Him who sent Me.”

Clapping games, dances, silly songs, soccer and lots of food... I think it's funny how many times I've sung “I love sugar. I love sugar. I love sugar, sugar, sugar”... and yet I think it's catchy and I still hum it in my head as I go about my day.

Obviously, I work with children. For whatever reason, in His majestic plan, He saw fit to make me the kind of person who has lots of energy and loves kids.

So when I told SIM “send me wherever there is a need”, they picked Lambano.

Lambano is a home for children who are HIV positive who were orphaned or abandoned. It was started because of a call that God placed on Melanie Streicher. She is a market researcher who could not have children. When she researched information about abandoned children, she found that there were not a lot of options for babies born with HIV. The home has 28 permanent children. There is also a hospice unit equipped to take care of children from the community who are very ill, specifically those who are HIV positive. It is the perfect fit for me! I am so grateful that God placed me here. I have a Bachelors of Arts in Liberal Studies and I'm intending to return to study for one more year so that I can get a teaching credential. During my studies, I did a lot of classroom observances, working with special needs children, creating and implementing curriculum and lesson plans, and learning about

teaching methods and pedagogy. Now I see the benefits of my learning and I am so glad that God had me study for all those years. At Lambano, I spend my mornings with my fellow missionary and friend Sarah teaching the children in the hospice unit that are well enough to converse with us. It varies from day to day; sometimes we have no one to teach and sometimes we will have up to four children (often teenagers). Sarah also has just finished her first year at a junior college going in to the same major. Having the background that we do allows us to be flexible and creative as we see each child's needs. I love taking advantage of those precious hours to teach them truths from the Bible and to incorporate the Word of God into the learning process. We know that the goal is for these kids to get well enough to return home quickly, so our time with them is short.

In the afternoons, I have allotted time with a couple of the permanent children to help them with their studies. One young girl that I work with daily had a stroke when she was 2 that left some brain damage, so we do activities to strengthen her brain. She is so excited every day when I come to do 'brain stretches'. She is nine years old and has been learning her colours. When we first started working together, she knew about three consistently. Now she can say all of the basic ones (not even I can say the difference



between teal and turquoise) and we are adding shapes and letters. Her improvement is amazing to see and her joy to learn is inspiring. She loves to show off what she has learned and encourages the other children to “come, stretch your brain” with us.

Sarah and I only have a short time with these kids. Fortunately, they have many other people in their lives who are a lot more consistent; the house mamas, the wonderful staff, an incredibly supportive local church, and many other locals from the community who make it a point to come and get to know the kids. It has been a huge blessing to serve alongside so many people. Our hearts melt for the kids daily. We want to be used to the uttermost during our time here... We want the children to see Christ in our serving, in our joy, in our attitude, and in our love for them. We want to be another example of Him that would encourage them to know Him. Your prayers for this home would be much appreciated: for the salvation of these children and for wisdom for the staff and volunteers as we raise 28 children to know Him. ■

By Sarah McCormick

Two and half months ago I set foot on African soil for the very first time.

I had spent the previous 6 months praying, planning, and preparing for my trip to Johannesburg but when I arrived I realized I had no idea what I was getting myself into. I knew that I would be working with kids and ultimately striving to serve the One who sent me. However, I did not fully prepare myself for just how much I would grow to love and care for the children He would send me to.

I work as a volunteer at a children's home called Lambano Sanctuary. Lambano is home to 28 children who are HIV positive that were either orphaned or abandoned. It also has an 18 bed hospice unit that reaches into the needs of the community. The goal of the hospice facility is to love, care for, and attend to the needs of ill children in a Christian environment. It is their aim to keep children within the community near to their families until their health improves or they pass on. The 28 permanent children are split up into 4 different homes within the same neighbourhood - each home housing 6-8 children. For the past

2 1/2 months I have been living in a flat-let behind one of these homes with my dear friend and fellow SIM missionary, Megan Allmon. It has been our joy to wake up each morning to the sound of children getting ready for school and rushing out of the door as we ourselves prepare for a day of work at Lambano.

During the weekdays Megan and I begin our mornings by meeting with the Lambano staff to pray for one another and the kids. It is our daily plea that the Lord would save these children and so we go out each day with the desire to lead them in Truth and to point them in the way everlasting. After our meeting I

watch a child understand something for the first time. Additionally, Megan and I try to hold a weekly Bible study at the house we are living in. More than homework, it has been a blessing to see these kids grow in their knowledge and understanding of Christ. We are overjoyed to see the growing desire they have to read God's Word and to know more about who He is.

I love these children more than I could ever have prepared myself for and although Megan and I have to leave soon, we want each child to know that there is a God who never leaves or forsakes His children. A God who is a Father to the fatherless and a God-the only God-



head to the hospice unit to teach the children Bible, maths, and reading. Back home I am studying to receive a degree in Liberal Studies with the hopes to one day enter the field of primary school education. I love teaching and so it is an honour to serve these kids, Lambano, and Christ in this way.

After the kids return from school, I spend the rest of the day helping with homework. Each day I work with a different child; reinforcing new concepts, helping them study, and quizzing them on all that they have learned. I love this part of the day because I find it truly special to

who is mighty to save. Please pray for me, Megan, the Lambano staff, and the local church as we continue to raise these children to know the Lord. Most importantly though, please pray for these children. The word Lambano means to receive, so we ask that you pray for salvation for each child; that they would truly know and receive Christ, The Giver of life. ■

If you would like to know more log on to: [www.lambano.org.za](http://www.lambano.org.za)

# Engaging the University

By Emma Brewster, Cape Town

Imagine a city with thousands of people between the ages of 17 and 40, a city of people from all parts of the globe and all backgrounds: the rich, the poor, the hungry, the gluttonous. A city full of those who have left their families behind. A city of strangers – each one full of hopes and dreams, hungry for an education, seeking to be better than when they first arrived in the city.

Some fulfill their dreams; others see those dreams dashed. Some survive and thrive; others drop out and can't cope. Some have the time of their lives, others lose their lives. This "city" is called "university!" Engaging the university is such a dynamic and exciting area of involvement for SIM. There are so many opportunities, only some of which we have been able to grasp. University is a

core mission field of unreached people from across the globe and down the road, from the city and from the bush.

## What are we already doing?

In Latin America SIM has opened cafés to provide safe meeting places, where students can play games, read books, make friends and learn English. In these cafés they find a community that cares and listens, a place where they can receive good counselling and find refuge.

In West Africa teaching English as a foreign language is an effective way to engage with students. We also teach computer skills, and create community and friendship through discussion, dialogue and social events.

In Ethiopia a key focus area for us is equipping the Church in topics such as sexuality and apologetics. In one university we have a philosophy lecturer who is making a huge impact in his department and among his students. In South Africa and Kenya we're seeking to work with the local churches to reach out to the many international students who come from across the continent of Africa.

In Asia we're pioneering a number of new fields through English teaching and openings for lecturers.

In our sending countries we are considering how we can mobilize and motivate a new generation. We want to see them living for Christ, wherever He calls them. As they reach out in mission, they need to consider both what God is calling them to do and who He is calling them to be.

We are beginning to see the strategic value of engaging such a community of people. And there are some exciting new developments in the pipeline. Students are the future leaders of our nations, businesses, schools and churches. By investing in this community we are investing in the future.

## The challenges students face

Aidah came to university from an underprivileged background. She had lived out in the bush and was a hard worker. Her father called her "good for nothing," and said she could never go on to further studies because she was only a girl. But Aidah surprised everyone by doing all of her chores and studying too. Each night she stayed up late, studying by candlelight. Because the teaching she received at school was sometimes not adequate, she often did extra study on her own.

When Aidah was accepted at university, her family couldn't believe it. She was the first in the family – or in the entire village – to be offered a place. Everyone expected her to get a good job one day and make enough money to lift not only her

own family out of poverty, but also the other 45 households in the village.

Her father sold their pride and joy, a beautiful heifer, to pay for her transport to the city and the university's registration fee. As she said farewell to her family and friends and boarded the bus, she was full of fear. What would life in the city be like? On arrival, where would she go? Who would she meet? How would she pay for her food? Where would she do her washing? What about textbooks? How could she afford them? Many university students worry about questions like these. They can feel terribly vulnerable.

David is studying medicine. He shares a room with 20 other young men, although there are only enough bunk beds and living space for six. They work on rotation throughout the night – some will sleep, while others are working. The only trouble is that the electricity is often out on campus. But David has found one street light just outside the campus that doesn't tend to go out. He often sits under it to write his essays.

During the day he and the others take turns attending lectures since there are not enough seats in the lecture hall for all of them to get in. Then they just copy each other's notes. David is very careful with his note taking. But sometimes his friends don't listen carefully, and David tries to teach himself using the few books in the library.

David leads one of the Christian groups on campus, and during their free time they go out to the rural areas to teach and preach. When we met, we talked about starting up an ethics group on campus to engage with some of the medical issues they faced. I think David will be a good surgeon, and will also impact the Christian community.

Wherever I travel I ask myself, "How can we partner and work alongside those who are already working with students? And where are the gaps? Will we dare to go to the places where no one else

is going?" Please join me in praying that we can take the opportunities that present themselves. ■

## Emma Brewster

*trained as a primary school teacher in the UK. She has served in student ministry since 1995, first through working for a church and later with UCCF (the UK's IFES movement). Emma worked with IFES in South Africa before joining SIM in 2012. In her current role Emma helps Christians in the countries we serve to support student ministry and identify the gaps in outreach, as well as mobilizing those with a heart for students.*

## PRAY:

- For more people with a heart to serve university students
- That ministry opportunities will be taken up, and gaps filled
- For wisdom and discernment for those who work among university students

# Who cares for the Children?

By Hilary & Bridge Riddell, KwaZulu-Natal

When most people hear our story they wonder what a 28-year-old graphic designer and a 25-year-old cupcake baker from Detroit, Michigan are doing at an orphanage in South Africa. The truth is we wondered the same thing in the beginning. But when God told us to go we said "yes," no matter what the work would be or how unqualified we felt. Bridge and I have taken on the roles of Assistant Village Manager and Volunteer Coordinator at Lily of the Valley Children's Village located in Kwazulu-Natal.

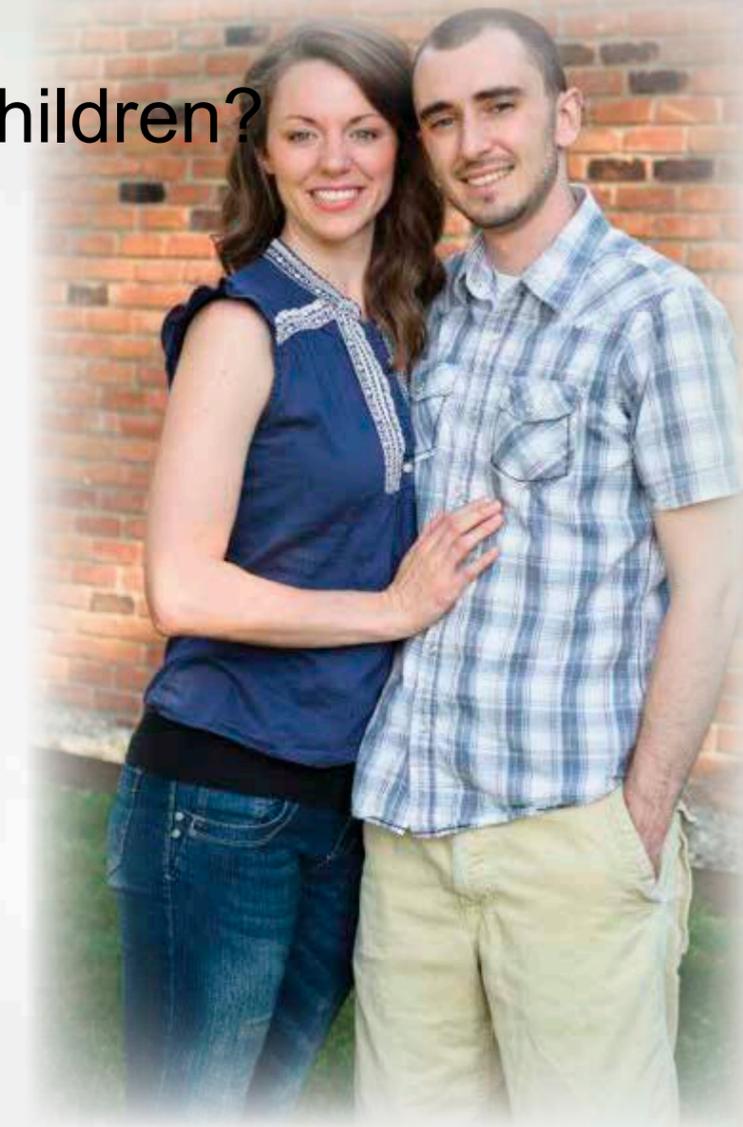
Lily of the Valley is a children's home that cares for vulnerable children who have been infected with or affected by HIV/AIDS. Not only are the basic needs of these children met, but Lily also provides counselling, education, medical care, and the love and support of a surrogate family. Lily's mission is to raise these children to become servant leaders of sustainable, healthy communities.

Lily was first established in 1993 as a hospice for orphans who were dying of HIV/AIDS. However, with increased medical care and accessibility of ARVs, these children began to live much longer. Lily was no longer a place that prepared children for death, but rather for life. Lily began to expand, and has grown into a home for 112 KZN orphans who receive full time residential care and multi-disciplinary support. 72% of the children are HIV positive and all have been deeply affected by HIV/AIDS in some way. While a number of our children suffer physical and mental disabilities, the biggest challenge they face are the deep emotional wounds caused by abuse, neglect, loss and rejection. As an organization, we understand that the only thing that can heal these children from their traumatic past is the love of our Heavenly Father and the grace of Jesus Christ.

Bridge and I are excited to be a part of what God is doing at Lily of the Valley. We stepped off the plane from the US just about 4 months ago and quickly felt confirmation that God had placed us at Lily of the Valley for a reason. Our most important role is to disciple these children and nurture their relationship with Christ. Secondly, we work with a team to maintain smooth operation of the village, coordinate volunteers, handle disciplinary issues and plan activities that will prepare our children for life after the village. ■

In order for the work at Lily of the Valley to continue, the organization relies on partners that commit to: sponsoring children, praying for the ministry here, giving regular and one-time gifts, volunteering, or sharing with others about all that God is doing at and through Lily. To learn more information or partner in our work at Lily please visit.

<http://www lov.org.za> or [www bridgeandhilary.com](http://www bridgeandhilary.com)



# Kingdom Service

Recently, a pastor was approached by various folk in his congregation about how to share their faith with Muslims that had become their neighbours or work colleagues. The pastor wasn't sure so phoned a friend at our SIM office, who sent me to him.

We decided to plan an evening to share about the basics of Islam and give a few pointers on where to start. They didn't want academics or theory but a practical idea on how to start a conversation and develop a friendship. I had a few talks on hand to share with various small Bible Study groups but this pastor was getting very keen and wanted to have all the Bible Study groups at his church come together for an evening and include a special halaal meal!

So, on a typical Cape-of-Storms wet winter's evening, I turned up prepared to show slides and share an outline of what Islam is about, and give an overview of basic "how to" things for building friendships. Then we would have an "apologetics" session afterwards covering the basic questions Muslims ask Christians. I knew that there would be supper between sessions but our enthusiastic pastor had hired a Muslim firm of caterers, in the middle of Ramadan, to provide an authentic 3-course meal for over 185 people and the folk who came paid for their meal. I was rather overwhelmed at the thought of all those people coming out in such bad weather, paying for the privilege of eating an unusual meal and listening to a complete stranger tell them how to share Jesus with Muslims! The church even provided an activity room and carers for kids so that their parents would not be distracted!

By God's grace the evening went very well. Although I was too nervous to eat much, I managed to answer some questions and make the content relevant and practical, and most people went home with notes and a booklet to prayerfully share with a Muslim friend when the time was right.

There is a trend emerging in our ministry. In the past we knocked on pastors' doors and asked for 5 minutes in a service or permission to visit each of their weekly Bible Study groups over a few months. This year, CHURCHES are calling on missionaries to come and share, and these calls are mostly prompted by congregations asking their pastors for information and resources.

Imagine how the work for the Kingdom would grow if each Christian had a Muslim friend to pray for and interact with. Imagine what difference it would make to our communities if each Muslim had a Christian friend. Imagine! ■





them to live a better life in South Asia. I'd become a certified childbirth and lactation educator, only this NGO was an excellent match for my previous life experiences and passions. But hearing this plan was fear-inducing! How could I do this – wasn't this moving too quickly? My husband is a great encourager and challenged me to at least try.

For two intense weeks, I worked with my tutors to design curriculum and translate it into Hindi. Maternal mortality and infant mortality rates are high in my country, and education empowers women to be able to lower those rates. I developed the class to cover topics including pregnancy, childbirth and breastfeeding. The 90 minutes include not only lecturing, but also activities to encourage the women's involvement. With increased knowledge, these women will have a better start to motherhood.

As I drove to the very first class, I was nagged by feelings of failure, being overwhelmed, and weakness. I prayed. The Lord responded, "Where is your faith? I am not asking you to do this alone." That afternoon fifteen pregnant women came to the class. My Hindi did not flow perfectly, but they understood me enough to learn the main points.

I return to the NGO each week. And each week I have emotions of doubt and failure, but God continues to challenge me to keep going and moving forward. I ask Him to bring the ladies He wants to my class, I ask Him to speak through me. I especially ask Him to help me develop relationships with the NGO staff. My husband and I are ending our full time language learning time this month. I feel thankful that God has used this vulnerable time in our lives. We do not know what the future holds, but we do know that God is at work here and we are excited to continue to take part in His work for as long as He calls us to serve here. ■



## From a Season of Weakness

By Dana

When we boarded an airplane to South Asia with a three month old, a two year old, and lots of luggage, we did not know what was in store for us. In America, we functioned well in the professional world as a nurse and computer programmer. In our church community, we led Bible Studies, disciplined believers, and shared the Gospel with unbelievers. We did not know how God would use these life experiences in South Asia.

The past two years since then have been a season of functioning in weakness. We came knowing that we were to be Hindi learners and students of culture. We started out learning to say, "Hello, how are you?" "This is a table." "Where are the vegetables?" At the end of long days we thought, "Really God? You brought us here for this?" We longed to use our professional skills and develop deep relationships to share the love and truth of Christ. God continually reminded us of his character with these words, "Cease striving and know that I am God." "Wait for the Lord. Be strong and let your heart take courage." So we persevered.

"You can start," said the NGO leadership, "by giving a class in surrounding villages to women in the prenatal period...in Hindi." Eighteen months into language learning, I had started volunteering at a local NGO committed to improving women's health and empowering

## On Days Like These

By Sarah

On days like these, I wonder who thought it was a good idea to approve me for ministry – let alone in a foreign country. When the weight of the heat and the weight of what it takes just to live here presses in harder than usual. When the only reaction that seems possible for my homesick heart is frustration and anger.

On days like these, I call a friend. I share only the good news. The Bible Study we had last night went well, I hear myself saying. That's true; there's a lot to rejoice about. Two sisters who always fought are slowly coming

together, reading Scripture together on my living room sofa. Gentle teasing, loving laughter that has been a long time coming, two sisters, both now professing faith in Jesus, learning that peace with God can mean peace with each other.

My friend has news of her own. Her meeting, the one she asked me to pray for, went well too. A wife who's been seeking God for a while has, it seems, found the One and Only. Events in her life have been pointing her to Truth my friend got to nudge her into seeing.

So why is it on days like these, we're both trying too hard to make our voices excited? Why is it that my exclamations of joy feel just a bit hollow? Why is it so hard to be honest?

Suddenly the truth comes out, bit-by-bit. I nearly cancelled my meeting, I confess, because my attitude had been so dark. She confesses too – she had felt so frustrated and discouraged about the day's events that she also came close to cancelling her meeting.

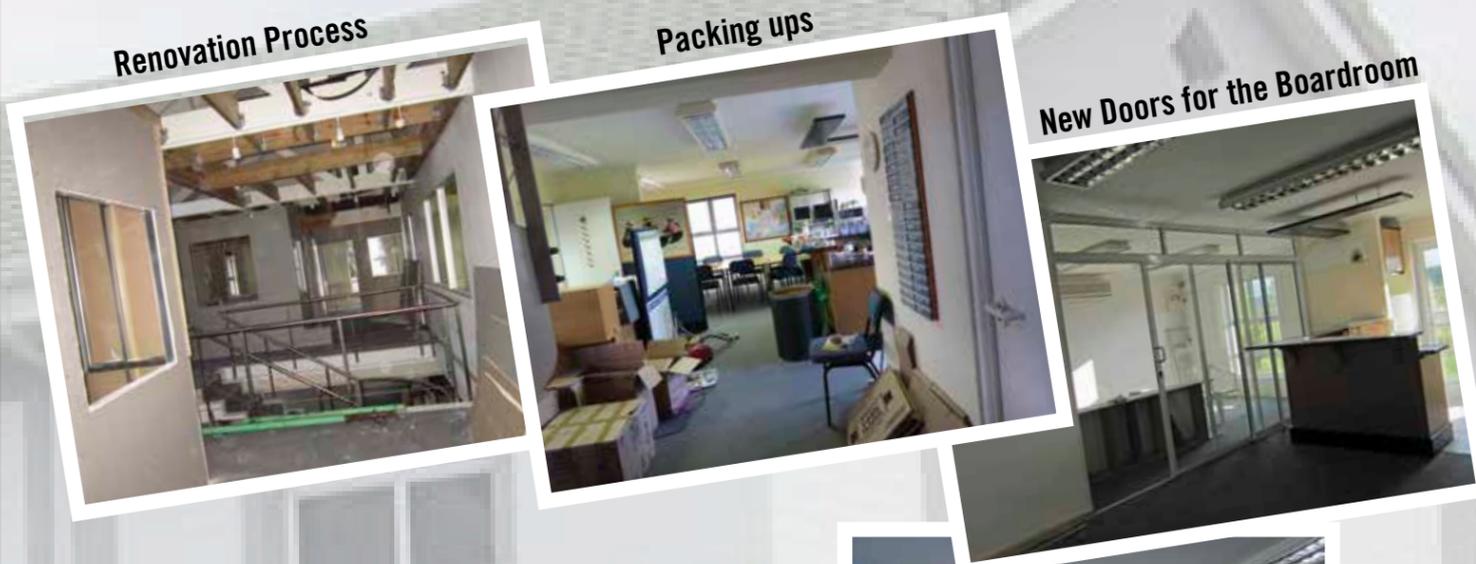
On days like these we pause – breathless and terrified at what our sin and bad attitudes nearly cost. Of the chances to share the good news we nearly surrendered for the easy way out. We wonder how God could think it was a good idea to call us into ministry – let alone to a foreign country.



Tentatively we thank God for the lives He's changing very much in spite of us – for the warring sisters finding their way to peace, for the new life springing up in unlikely places. For the good news of forgiveness and new mercies that, on days like these, we're thankful we get to tell to others and receive for ourselves. ■

►► Field India is looking for people who are willing to faithfully bring their strengths and weaknesses to be used by a faithful God. Do you have professional skills in areas like medicine, counselling, or the creative arts? Are you a relational person who could build into the lives of believers or unbelievers? Do you enjoy administration work and keeping forms and schedules in order? Contact your local sending office for information on how God might use any one of those skills in India!

# CHALLENGES BEHIND THE SCENES



Prior to 2008, SIM operated in South Africa through a Field Office in Johannesburg and a Sending Office in Cape Town. As a result of the merger of these two functions the office in Johannesburg closed and the building was subsequently sold. The Field functions were taken over by the Cape Town Office thus creating a need for more staff to cope with the increased workload. After much prayer the Lord answered by calling missionaries to come and join the team in Cape Town. The big problem was where do we put them? Again after much prayer and investigation it was decided to revamp the current building so that we could create extra office space for folk who were expected to arrive towards the end of this year.

From 28 July to 01 August (and even before), we were frantically busy with packing up the office to move to the Mission House. At the same time, we were preparing another property to act as a temporary "Mission House" so that we could have accommodation for the Council members who were coming for Council meetings on 01 and 02 August. Then the week of 04 to 08 August, we welcomed a new couple, Try and Bester from Zimbabwe for SIMstart amidst the chaos of the office upheaval! Actual

reconstruction began on 11 August and we could at least now see what the new layout of the offices would look like once finished. However, there was still plenty of work that needed to be completed before we could begin to think about moving back.

As always the renovations took longer than expected and we were "camped" in our temporary premises for three and a half months. The Lord graciously granted us all patience and harmony as we worked in close proximity with one another.

At last we were in a position to reverse the order of the moves and settle back into our new offices which in itself provided many challenges! The most difficult being that of moving back into offices that are much smaller in size.

Even though there is still much to be done before everything is complete we give thanks to the Lord for His leading, undertaking and provision to make it all happen. We also appreciate the understanding and patience exercised by our missionaries, supporters and constituents. Not only did they find it difficult to contact us but the service and support we

provided was comprised because of the difficult circumstances we had to work under. We now look forward expectantly to what the Lord will do not only through the missionaries out on the Field but also through those serving BEHIND THE SCENES.

Should you wish to contribute to the building renovation costs please mark your gift with the reference: your name and "Office Renovation Fund". ■

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**New Doors for the Finance Department**



**New Stairs to Loft Storage**



**New Offices Upstairs**

# Your Final Gift to Missions

One of the ways that you can help SIM to reach people with the message of God's love is to include a gift in your Will. This will help us to reach many who have never heard the Good News of Jesus and His love. It will also enable us to disciple new Christians to become strong in their new-found faith so they can share this with others in their own nation or community. Please ensure that you state 'SIM Southern Africa' in your Will and if need be, we can refer you to a Christian attorney to assist you. We can also suggest some specific projects for your consideration. Please feel free to contact us to discuss this further. ■



## Would you like to contribute to the cost of SIMNOW

As a guide, to provide one person with two magazines per year, publication costs are approximately R30 per annum. Please make out any cheques to "SIM Southern Africa". For direct banking: SIM Southern Africa, Standard Bank, Blue Route Branch code: 025609, account number: 07 287 7014. Please fax a copy of the deposit slip to SIM at 021 715 3220.



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