

SIM *now*

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and much more....



Praying during Elections

There are many things that discourage and frustrate the work of missions and missionaries these days, things like visas, support, political turmoil, safety and security and many other issues which often disrupt the work and proclamation of God's salvation message. These issues sometimes differ from and even conflict with our Western ways of doing things. In all situations we must fix our eyes on our Lord Jesus Christ who is the author and finisher of our faith. We must pray that our missionaries remain true to Christ and His Word. When thinking of the harvest we cannot ignore the leaders of the nations in which we serve. We must pray that the Lord would soften hearts and that people would receive His Gospel.

Paul, in 1 Timothy 2:1-6 says: "I urge, then, first of all, that petitions, prayers, intercession and thanksgiving be made for all people, for kings and all those in authority, that we may live peaceful and quiet lives in all godliness and holiness. This is good, and pleases God our Saviour, who wants all people to be saved and to come to a knowledge of the truth. For there is one God and one mediator between God and mankind, the man Christ Jesus, who gave himself as a ransom for all people. This has now been witnessed to at the proper time. And for this purpose I was appointed a herald and an apostle—I am telling the truth, I am not lying—and a true and faithful teacher of the Gentiles". He requests the church (believers) to pray for those in leadership positions. Paul reminds us that there is only one God, that Jesus Christ is our mediator and that lost sinners are saved through His atoning death.

Recently newspapers, prayer letters and other media have mentioned upcoming elections in different places around the world. I have been wondering more and more how the results will affect Christians in those countries, what impact will they have on the missionaries who are



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striving to be salt and light, often in dark and seemingly hopeless situations?

Of course, South Africa went to the polls recently, and we need to pray for the leadership of this country. We are all aware of the issues concerning justice, education, healthcare, job creation, housing, and many others. There are enough issues to keep all the politicians busy for the next term regardless of their political affiliation. Perhaps it is idealistic of me to pray that the various political parties would work together on issues that affect everyone, but I pray anyway.

Bangladesh held elections last month. Malaysia will be holding elections in May and Thailand in the near future. Italy is about to announce a new leader for their current government. Egypt, Sudan and countries affected by last year's Arab Spring Movement will continue to have talks about talks and referenda this year.

As 2014 progresses and we hear about elections or political change let us offer a prayer for God's people and His work in those situations. God is Sovereign and Lord of all and He delights in the praises and prayers of His people. So let us delight the Lord in earnest! ■



TEAM WORK

by Greg Cameron, Paraguay

We think we have the best team in the world! Don't worry, there is no danger of us thinking that its because we are on it – it already became the best before we arrived in Paraguay. Yet, as we have had the privilege of learning from a first-class group of missionaries, we took a few moments to capture some thoughts about team-unity as encouragement to make your ministry teams the best in the world too!

Nobody would argue a perspective of ministry being a one-man-show. Our different gifts clearly need to work together as one body (*1 Corinthians 12*). However, it was basically Jesus' dying wish that unity would be protected and characterize those belonging to Him in order to cause the world to believe (*John 17:11, 21-23*). So here we draw a distinction between team-work and team-unity. All too often we are reminded that God is not only concerned about the task of missions but also about how it is carried out in our relating with others as He works in us, not just through us.

Sincerity: One of the most haunting verses exists in *Matthew 12:36*, when Jesus said, "But I tell you that men will have to give account on the day of judgment for every careless word they have spoken." Few things can fester strife between team-mates as much as careless words: grumbling, fault finding, sarcasm, comparing, boasting, flattery, scoffing (*Jude:16*). To cultivate sincere brotherly love (*1 Peter 1:22*) we must choose humility and the kind of speech that encourages and is motivated by faith.

Submission: "But the wisdom that comes from heaven is first of all pure; then peace-loving, considerate, submissive, full of mercy and good fruit, impartial and sincere. Peacemakers who sow in peace raise a harvest of righteousness." *James 3:17-18*.

To say that conflict won't arise, especially when varying nationalities converge to work side by side, is not realistic. The best remedy we have found is in *Romans 14:19*, "Let us therefore make every effort to do what leads to peace and to mutual edification." When interpersonal differences chafe, freely forgive, apologize and be flexible with personal plans and activities (*see Ephesians 5:21*).



Share: A missionary term of 4 years means a lot of time committed to a ministry family. Whether it's a birth or a breakfast, a death or a disappointment we treasure the bonds of family weathered by all our ups and downs. The nugget of *1 Thessalonians 5:12-18* is joyfully praying together with thanksgiving. A family that prays together often can accomplish greater things together.

We will close with one illustration of team-unity. A team-mate was not responding to calls, was travelling on one of the most dangerous roads of Paraguay and had missed a flight. Imagining the worst, the whole team was alerted and began praying at 2:00 am while the search was on. When he was finally discovered, it turned out that his cell phone was not charging and he had merely forgotten which day the flight was, but everyone on the team was simply relieved and rejoiced. Nobody considered it an imposition or irritation to be woken up at that hour, instead, we found it a reassurance that in the event of any great personal need, even there would be our ministry family! ■

Some of our ministry prayer needs:

- for the planting of home churches in outlying rural areas around Yuty
- that each time there will be believers from the Yuty church willing to come with us and extend their fellowship.
- that rural junior schools will accept our offer to teach English using Bible stories in their classrooms.



God has not forgotten them!

By Alfred Paetzold, Mozambique

When we became full-time missionaries nearly 16 years ago, we had no idea of the journey that lay ahead of us. Right from the start God called us to work in Mozambique and slowly He unfolded His plan for us as a family...

The journey was definitely not a short one and it is also not over yet. We have been preparing and have been prepared in many ways and are very excited to finally present the Gospel to the Yao people later this year!

There are really no quick fixes in Africa – as the saying goes “The church is one kilometre long but only 1 centimetre deep” and that is not what God wants for His church. He wants followers who trust and follow Him in everything, not just when all is well. And hence our longish strategy.

We moved to Mozambique in 2007 to live in a big city for further Portuguese studies. After two years we moved out to a very rural setting to build our house (hand-made, all of it) and then to settle down and study the mother tongue of the Yao people group. Not many speak Portuguese out here and even their best men could not explain certain beliefs and ideas in Portuguese.

Now, four years later, Alfred has reached a high enough level of language and has begun getting ready for presenting the Gospel in ChiYao! Needless to say, we are very excited but also full of fear and trembling for this great task that God has entrusted to us.

The Yao people were once the fierce slave hunters of the north. Now they are poor subsistence farmers, followers of Islam with a very low expectation of life in general. One man who visited us said “Everyone has forgotten us, the government has forgotten us, and even God has forgotten us!” The good news is that God has not forgotten them, He has great plans for them, plans to

prosper them, to bring them hope and a future!!

We plan to present the Bible, starting in Genesis and showing them step-by-step who God really is, why there is sin in the world and what God did to make things right again. God’s Word is alive. So many times we have seen people reading portions of Genesis only to be touched beyond our wildest dreams. We truly believe God’s timing is perfect and His timing for the Yao is now!

Please pray with us for the hearts of the people to be totally ready, for Alfred in his last stages of language learning and for our protection as a family. We look forward to report back on what God has done for the Yao whom He loves with a fierce love. ■



Open DOORS

By Herman and Salome Viljoen, KZN

After six years of fruitful ministry in the Chinese community in Johannesburg, the Lord sent us to the Natal South Coast to work with Project Positive Ray, an AIDS ministry. We have been involved in a variety of ministries right through our career and this was just another challenge for us. Little did we know the plans of the Lord.

We shared with our colleagues our desire to reach out to the Chinese business people in the area. Their response was “Every second shop is owned by a Chinese family, so apart from your ministry with Positive Ray, there will be plenty of opportunities for you to do this kind of ministry.”

When we arrived in Port Shepstone, Salome went to the local supermarket. There was a Chinese lady walking in front of her. She greeted her and said to her in Chinese: “Jesus loves you”. Her response was “I know because I am a Christian.”

This is how our ministry among the Chinese people on the south coast of KZN started.

We had some tracts, New Testaments and Bibles in Chinese that our colleagues in Gauteng had given us. Some of the tracts are bilingual, which makes it easy for us to know what they are about. This came in very handy as we do not know Chinese at all.

We started in the Port Shepstone business areas. It involved Herman driving and Salome looking out of the window and calling “Stop!” whenever she saw a Chinese shop. Sometimes we could not find parking, so we did our investigation on foot. Later, our ministry expanded to Hibberdene (40 kilometres north from our home) and Port Edward (40 kilometres south from our home).

We had a very cold reception where ever we went. We prayed to the Lord to show us what was wrong. Through conversations with the people, we realized that they thought that we were from a certain sect who were bombarding them with literature.

One morning after our devotions, Salome stood in front of her cupboard, praying again that the Lord would show us how we could prove to them that we are different. The

answer was hanging in front of her in the cupboard – a choir waistcoat that she had from the Edenvale Chinese church! The next day she wore the waistcoat and Herman wore a Christian cap.

From the first time that we put on our “uniforms” the people’s attitude changed. We were greeted warmly and saw again the smiles that we had been accustomed to from our dear Chinese friends. We prayed in their shops and read the Bible to them. We read the English side and they read the Chinese side.

We have visited more than 45 shops. Not “every second shop” in Port Shepstone is a Chinese shop but during our visits we have found about 16 people who are either committed Christians or have a Christian background. There were even Buddhist people who allowed us to pray in their shops. We have also had people from different races and religions asking us what is written on the waistcoat, and this has created many opportunities to share the Gospel and the love of Jesus with various people.

We have done many follow-up visits to all these people, even to those who are not Christians. Every time we make our visit brief but as fruitful as possible.

Before going back to China, a Buddhist man who has a shop in another shopping mall, told his family who are also Buddhists that they must listen to the lady who wears a waistcoat with Chinese words printed on it and the man with the Christian cap, because they are speaking the truth. What an open door this has created for us to share the Gospel with this family. Please pray with us for their salvation.

Pray with us as we hope to expand this ministry and start small Bible study groups in the various towns that we have visited.

Pray with us that we will know if we should go west, north or south to other towns and villages, searching for Chinese business people to share the Gospel with them.

Praise the Lord for a church choir waistcoat and a Christian cap! ■



Christmas Picnic

By Alan Wainwright, Gauteng

We have a club of Christian ladies who meet together once a month in my home to encourage each other, and to learn more about the Bible and how to share it with our Muslim friends. Then we spend some time praying for our Muslim friends. (Of course we also have a good tea and chat, because “meeting without eating is cheating!” as an Indian pastor once said).

For the last three years, the highlight of the year has been our “Christmas Picnic”. We plan it for early December, and we find a really beautiful picnic spot out in the bush, far from the hustle and bustle of the city. Then we go around inviting our Muslim lady friends. So far, the ones who have mostly responded with excitement are the ladies foreign to South Africa, who

don't get to go out very much, and who were far from family and friends.

We tell everyone it is a “bring and share” picnic, so we get a great variety of eats, from briyani and samoosas, to cupcakes and fruit salad. We prepare a Christmas message, telling the Christmas story, explaining the prophets up until Jesus, and the reason why Jesus came to this earth. At our last year's picnic we wrote out verses in English and Urdu for the ladies to read for themselves. Each lady was given a verse, and when it came to that part of the message, she had to read the verse, either in English or in Urdu.

A great time is had by all! We go for a walk, give small gifts to each lady, and just enjoy being together. Last year we had a much larger number of children

than previously. There were about sixteen children! The picnic spot chosen this time had a lovely swimming pool, so the children had a whale of a time swimming. One of our club ladies had made a pinyata full of sweets, so they also enjoyed that.

The Christmas picnic is a wonderful opportunity for us to share the love of Jesus with our friends, as well as to explain the Gospel to them, all the time trusting the Lord to grow the seeds that are planted in their hearts. Next year we hope to have a separate children's talk and time of sharing with them which will be at their level and expressed in ways that they understand. ■



Leadership Consultation

By Siegfried Ngubane

I recently returned from an SIM International Leadership Consultation which took place in Malaysia in February this year. It was led by our newly appointed International Director Dr Joshua Bogunjoko with the theme, ‘Striving to preach the gospel where Christ is not yet known’.

This was a very important gathering of some 60 SIM missionaries and leaders, to discuss and pray together and plot the way forward for SIM in the years ahead. Dr Joshua Bogunjoko led us in the first two sessions, by asking what he referred to as the BIG question: ‘Why does SIM exist?’ A lot more difficult problems were grappled with such as the question ‘Why do we do all that we do to encourage people to leave family and friends and travel to distant lands?’, ‘What should our focus be for the future?’ The ultimate goal of the consultation was to set a leadership agenda for SIM for the coming years.

Our keynote devotional speaker was Dr Howie Brant who started off each day with an inspiring devotional based on the book of Acts. This helped to ensure that all of our discussions were soundly based on the Word of God. The International Leadership Team gave various presentations on topics relating to outreach and mobilization, partnership and mobilization, leadership development, flourishing people, and Compassion and Equipping. Time was also spent discussing SIM's relationship with churches. It was felt that SIM was part of the church as a resource for missions.

As we worked together there were times of prayer, the freedom to share and an openness to acknowledge problems and challenges. I believe the Lord is going to use this consultation to enable SIM to become even more effective in reaching those who have still never heard the Good News. ■

Mobilization

by Henry Jooste

In our mobilization we have two main emphases. Our first focus is knowing Him and making Him known, the second is to work with the Church, the body of Christ. We have a message to carry to the unsaved world and we recognize that God uses His people to proclaim His Word. How do we seek to mobilize the Church and individuals in the Church to be part of this great task God has entrusted to His people? Probably the most important is to seek to motivate people to prayer. Our motto as SIM is “By Prayer.” Would you consider becoming a prayer partner, hosting a prayer group or distributing prayer needs to others?

Then we work with the Church in challenging individuals to consider serving God as missionaries. We cannot forget that the task has been mandated to the Church, not to SIM or any other organization. So where we find members of the Body of Christ, whether at Bible Training Institutes, or at mission conferences or through social media, we point back to the Church and seek partnership with the Church.

SIM can provide missionaries, when available, or speakers to visit home cell groups, Sunday Schools, ladies meetings, youth meetings or any other meeting where we can present the challenge of the work that needs to be done. Would you consider inviting a SIM speaker? Contact us to help make arrangements.

Another way to grow in mission understanding is to visit a mission field and be exposed to the work being done or join a short term team and get involved in doing something.

SIM also has the “Hands On Training” (HOT) programme, to give exposure and experience on the mission field. Would you consider making a one year commitment to serve God? The first part will be spent in training followed by various placements in different ministries and God willing on different mission fields.

The great task that Christ has entrusted to us is not done yet, we need more workers. Pray with us for Christ-centred workers to go and continue the task.

In June we will be travelling to Gauteng and White River again. Please pray for strategic fruitful ministry opportunities.

At the end of June into July we will be visiting KZN. Please pray for opportunities to speak about the great need to make Christ known among the nations. ■

EVERY PICTURE TELLS A STORY



By Rachel Fredlund, Principal, Mseleni Children's Home and Director, Lulisandla Kumntwana

Nomusa has a lot to carry. Her dad died in 2007, and then her mum got sick and also passed away in 2011. That left Nomusa caring for her younger brothers and sisters. There are 5 of them – boys of 16 and 6, and in between them the girls aged 15, 14 and 12. Her Mum and Dad did not have any identity documents, so it was very difficult to get birth certificates for the younger siblings, which also meant that they could not get the foster child grant. (Nomusa does have an ID book and she receives a child support grant for her own 2 children. Sadly she is separated from the father of her children.)

When the parents died, the mud and stick house was already in disrepair. An insect infestation caused the poles to rot, and heavy rains finished off the job. So from 2011 to 2013 the family lived in a tent. Then the tent got old, so whenever it rained they had to ask to be taken in by the neighbours. Often they had no food and slept hungry. The children mostly dropped out of school.

Once the Lulisandla Kumntwana team got to know of this family we were able to help on various levels. The foster team and co-ordinators have been working on the documents and now it is just the death certificate for the father and 2 birth certificates which are outstanding. Soon all will be sorted and we will be able to take them to the Children's Court, formalize the foster placement with the sister, and help them to apply for the foster child grant. In October 2013 one of the volunteer teams from CoCos Foundation built them a house. The Lulisandla Kumntwana Family Support Team volunteer has been

visiting regularly giving them encouragement and support. Now the children are all back enrolled in school, and the family is attending a local church. While the foster situation is still pending, the family have been receiving regular food parcels.

While the building of the house was still being planned, I shared the story of this family with the children of Mseleni Children's Home, and they wanted to help. They could see that getting a house was not enough. "We could make things and sell them!" We made a plan, and in the September holidays they worked very hard. They made craft items (wire cars, painted gourds, wool doilies, beadwork, papier mache dishes), and they washed cars. They even helped a neighbour to slaughter and pluck chickens. By the end of the holiday they had raised R855! This was enough to buy basic school uniforms, school bags, pens and pencils and some toiletries for the family.

In December a group of the Mseleni Children's Home children went to visit the family to hand over these gifts. It was a very special day for our children and for this family. Nomusa's family were amazed that a group of kids could manage to raise money like that, and they were very grateful. The Mseleni Children's Home children were quite moved to see the difficult circumstances that this family had been living in, and were so happy that they had done something to help, and responded, "Let's do it again for another family!" ■



The LORD is NEVER Wrong

By a SIM Missionary

For all of you who battle with permits to work in countries other than your own and to those who battle with other things that just seem to always cause stress in your life, this account of the Lord's power at work is intended to encourage you to keep trusting and pushing at those doors that seem to be shut.

After 14 years of working in a country in Africa, it was not strange to once again arrive at a place where I was waiting for the renewal of my permit. As always I handed in the application for renewal of my permit way in advance to make sure that there would not be any unnecessary delays, but this time it did not help at all. It was June and I was out of time, and nobody at the office of Home-Affairs could give me any answer or indication of how long I was going to wait.

By the grace of God I heard about a woman who had gone to see the deputy minister of Home-Affairs some years ago. I called her and got the deputy minister's number. It took several days before I finally managed to speak to him in person and then set up an appointment to see him.

One of the local pastors and his wife came with me on the four and a half hour trip to the capital of the country to meet with the deputy minister. As we entered the building we were immediately stopped by the building security and we needed to check in. They looked in a book of appointments, and after finding our names buzzed us into the building. We were then escorted by a police/security officer to the 3rd floor of the building. On the 3rd floor we also passed through a door that was buzzed open by thumb print of the security officer.

Finally, we arrived in the reception area of the deputy minister's office!

After a few minutes he called us in and was very friendly...I started to relax, everything was going just dandy! The deputy minister called a top official from the office area somewhere down the hall from his office, and told her that people like myself from Christian organizations are needed in the country. He told her to get this permit endorsed in the passport and said that there should be no reason why this permit should not be approved.

We left the office with the lady who was now supposed to help me. She told us to take a seat as she was going to check on the paperwork. I also handed her a complete copy of the application. After about 20 minutes she returned and announced that she could not find anything at all, but that she would keep on looking and that we should go back home. I immediately sensed the Holy Spirit talking to me, saying "Stay Put". I told her I would wait while she searched some more. She stared at me with a hint of irritation in her eyes, but left again to search more for my application and file. When we entered the

building earlier I noticed many piles of paperwork and files lining the stairways and halls....

After another 15 minutes or so she returned again and told me that the lady who works with my file is on a training course and her office is locked, but that she had called her and was now waiting to hear from her. I was then told again to leave and wait for a call from her. She also said if they cannot find my file they will table the copy I provided the following week to a committee who will



then decide about the outcome. I told her I would leave but would call again to hear if they had found my file.

At this point I was very discouraged and frustrated. As we left the building I remembered the time of fasting earlier in the year during January. I remembered that during the fast I prayed a lot about the permit situation in this country, not only for mine but also for my fellow team members. I also remembered sensing the peace of the Lord at that time, a peace that the permit was approved and that I could stop worrying about it!

About 3 hours passed after we left the office but I could not focus on anything else. I remember that as I walked around in a shopping-mall with my friends, feeling so discouraged, I sensed that the Lord was saying that I should buy this lady who had been searching for my file a small box of chocolates and then take it to her and thank her for her efforts to find my file. I got the gift and then I called her, asking if there was any news. She immediately answered that she could not find the file but that she would take the duplicate application to the committee the next week. I then told her that I wanted to bring her a small gift showing my appreciation for all her efforts. I said I would bring it to her office after her lunch hour. She sounded a bit friendlier but not helpful at all.

My friends who were with me were also starting to get weary of this process. They agreed to take me back to the office and wait in the car as I was only going to hand the gift to the woman. It was just after lunch. Once again I was at the entrance of the building. As I entered the security officer recognized me from that morning, and at the same moment the secretary of the deputy minister also entered the building and saw me. She said she would take me to the 3rd floor. I happily walked with her. I had no idea where the office of the case worker, was so I sat down just outside the deputy minister's office hoping that I would spot her by chance. After about 20 minutes the secretary saw me still waiting and she then told me to go down a hall and take a lift, then I would find two security doors. These doors can only be opened by thumb print of one of the office workers. The secretary told me to stand at the door and then to try to wave when I saw somebody on the other side of the glass doors so that they could open the doors for me.

I waved and tried to get the attention of someone...but could not manage to do so. Then finally...I looked at the locked doors and spoke to the Lord. "Lord you know I need to get into that office so I am just going to walk to the doors and push down the handle..." And I did just that. As I touched the first door it opened and I kept walking to the second and it opened!!!! I was on the other side and my faith level just leapt to another dimension!

Two doors down from there I found "the lady". She looked at me with a frown "How did you get in here she asked?" "Through the doors" I said. "Who let you in?" "Nobody" I said, "The doors opened!" I sat down in front of her table handing her the gift and thanking her for her efforts so far. She then immediately said, "You are so persistent, I have already told you that I can do nothing for

you today". "Yes" I said, "I know you said this, but here is where I have a problem. I know that the Lord spoke to me in January of this year and He said that I should not worry about my permit as it will be OK. The Deputy Minister asked you this morning to help me and said there should not be any reason why I could not have the permit...so who should I believe? I know the Lord does not make mistakes. Should I just go and tell the Deputy Minister that his authority is not above yours?" "No-no-no" she replied, "that is not necessary, but I have looked everywhere and cannot find anything. If your file was tabled anytime in the past 6 months then it should be on this new system on the computer," and with that she turned the screen of her computer so that I could also see it. "Have you typed in my initials with my last name?" I asked, "Yes" she said sounding very irritated with me. "Well, try my name first then my last name" I asked. She was very irritated and while talking to me she typed in my name and then my last name and hit enter.... and there it was, my permit!!! Approved!!! She paged down to see when this happened...January! "Wow" I exclaimed. "Yes" she said "The Lord is never wrong".

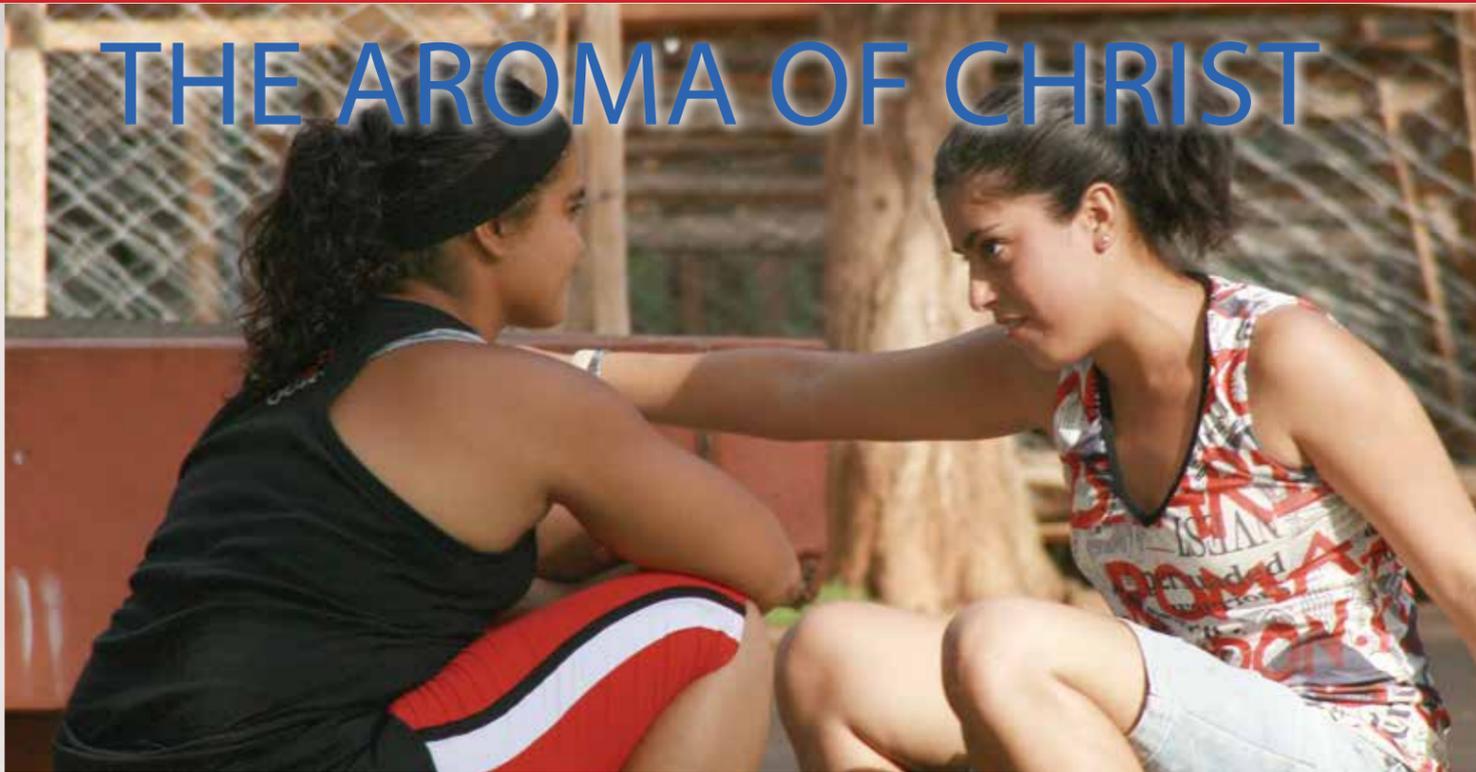
The office was closing for the day. She asked me to return the next morning, promising to help with getting me into the building and with the paperwork to get the permit endorsed into my passport. For this I needed to return to her office on the 3rd floor the next morning. Again she didn't show up and again the Lord helped me - first just to get into the building past the initial security and again I was in front of the two closed doors on the 3rd floor.

I looked up, gave a silent prayer and walked to the doors, pressing down the handle and the doors opened a second time!!!! Once again she was stunned to see me reappear at her table. After I had payed for the permit and gone to the 3rd floor for the third time, she then helped me and I left 2 hours later with my permit in my passport.

I believe that just as the Lord opened prison doors for Peter in the book of Acts, so He opened doors for permits to be endorsed.

May the Lord encourage you as you continue to trust Him in all things. ■

THE AROMA OF CHRIST



By Wayne and Jenny Herman - Cape Town

“But thanks be to God, who always leads us in triumphal procession in Christ and through us spreads everywhere the fragrance of the knowledge of him. For we are to God the aroma of Christ among those who are being saved and those who are perishing. To the one we are the smell of death; to the other, the fragrance of life. And who is equal to such a task?” II Cor 2:14-16

How do you react when you get a whiff of an obnoxious odour? Do you cough, wrinkle your nose or make a hasty retreat? By contrast, the smell of chocolate chip cookies baking or a beautiful rose brings a smile and draws one closer. This passage from II Corinthians caused me to think of how people’s sense of smell causes them to react differently, is similar to the different reactions I have noticed among the people I have met as we minister on Main Road in the southern suburbs of Cape Town.

As our outreach team, Word on the Street, goes out week after week, we have been able to build relationships with some of the sex workers, homeless people and others who are wandering the streets at night. Some of them greet us as old friends, others have a, “Oh, it’s you again” response and still others make it obvious that they are trying to avoid us or say that they are too busy to talk or can’t talk to us because they are being watched. One night a lady, waving her hands like she was shooing us away with a very disgusted tone of voice, said, “Church people, walk on, walk on”!

Many of the people that we meet say that they would rather not be where they are now. They dream of having

a good job and a place of their own but for many reasons feel that they are stuck in their present circumstances. Like many countries in the world South Africa has a very high rate of unemployment, an enormous number of people with drug, alcohol and other addictions; a huge problem with abuse of women and children; a huge disparity between the haves and the have-nots, and the list goes on. It could be easy to become discouraged by all of the challenges but we know from experience and faith in God’s Word that “nothing is impossible with God” (Luke 1:37).

To quote from a little piece of paper hanging on my refrigerator, we are “more impressed with the greatness of God than the size of the task”! Many people do have huge obstacles to overcome but we have had the privilege of seeing a few lives transformed through the work of His Spirit in people’s lives. It is possible but it is a slow and costly process to walk a life-changing journey with someone; sometimes it means lost sleep, and always much time and prayer is invested but it is so worth it!

Meanwhile, our team will continue to “spread the fragrance of the knowledge of God” on Main Road. Occasionally it will be by giving candy or cups of hot chocolate, or by inviting people to have dinner at a nearby church, or by having worship on the street corner. We will strive to spread the sweet “aroma of Christ” by offering our friendship, words of encouragement and prayer. Please pray that eyes (and noses) would be opened and hearts would be softened in order that these dear ones will draw closer and come to the wonderful, life-changing knowledge of God. ■

I lift my eyes up to the mountains
where will my help come from?

By a SIM Missionary serving in Asia

Occasionally a patient comes along who grips my heart and whose story will always stay with me. Maya was one of them. I first saw her about 18 months ago. She came in with an unusual skin rash, which was resolved with treatment. Over the next few weeks she was back with various other problems and eventually we sent her to Kathmandu for further tests. She was diagnosed with an aggressive form of SLE (an autoimmune disease affecting the whole body).

When I saw her again about a year later, I did not recognize her. She had had meningitis four months earlier and was left blind, with severe hearing impairment. Since falling ill, she had been lying curled up in a bundle and this had caused severe contractures in her legs. She had given up on life.

The cheerful little girl of 18 months ago was now screaming in anger and frustration at any touch – the only way to communicate with her.

Over the following weeks I spent a lot of time with Maya and her mother, seeing how she started to respond to touch and loud talking, how she had started eating again, how she had good days of going down to physiotherapy – hoping that she could learn to walk again. She improved a little over this time and wanted to go home for a few days. She was discharged and later re-admitted for rehabilitation a few times – improving very slowly. A few days later I heard that she had come in during the night and died in the Emergency Room. Her mother’s heart was broken and for all of us who cared for her it was very sad, but we also knew that her life was very hard with all her disabilities and that her long term prognosis was very poor. So in some ways death was a relief to her.

“I lift my eyes up to the mountains – where will my help come from?” We so often see people in desperation – crying out – ‘Where will help come from?’ In the Nepali cultural context, illness as most other things, is seen in a spiritual way. In their desperation to seek help, people will often go from one place to another, searching for help and answers, at temples and traditional healers. Maya and her family spent enormous amounts of money doing this.

During her last few weeks in hospital she and her mother attended our chapel services. Her mother started reading the Bible and learned some songs. They heard the gospel many times and said that they wanted to follow Jesus – hoping that He would be the One who would be her help. We often prayed for them both that they would come to truly know Him and His salvation,

and also that Maya would be healed. In the end she died, so she did not get the help that they were desperate for. Yet they heard the gospel and were drawn to Him who heals and brings life in a different way.

Where will my help come from? Every day we see people before us with this question in their hearts. So often we wish that we could just reach out and touch them and they would be well. But mostly it does not happen. Our hospital is a place where people hear about the One who is the true Healer, not only of bodies, but of hearts, a place where many people find healing for their bodies, but not always, some people die, leaving loved ones behind- still crying out:

“Where will my help come from?” May they and the many others who come to this place come to know Him who is our Help. Even when the ‘help’ is so often so different from what we expect or hope for. ■



AN OPPORTUNITY FOR SERVICE

By Victor Fredlund, Mseleni

Bongi was widowed some 15 years ago. Her husband's death was traumatic and difficult, and she was left with 7 children, one of whom was a newborn. Her mum was already a Christian and a part of the church which has grown up at Hlulabantu under the ministry of the Fredlunds as they serve at Mseleni where Victor is a doctor, and Rachel manages the Mseleni Children's Home, and Lulisandla Kumntwana (Reach Out To The Child – AIDS Orphan project). Through the encouragement of her mum, the Fredlunds and other church members, she started attending church. The Lord touched her heart as she learnt that the Lord is a father to the fatherless and a protector of the widows. She made the decision not to seek for revenge, but to trust her whole life into God's hands, and to rely upon Him in everything. She is a radiant Christian, and declares that the Lord has kept all His promises and has never let her down.

As she grew in faith, the Lord gave her an amazing heart of compassion. When Lulisandla Kumntwana started ministering to orphans in the community, she grasped the opportunity to join the Family Support Team at Hlulabantu, serving as one of the volunteers, faithfully visiting and giving care to a number of orphan families living near her home.

During 2013 Rachel and her LK staff sent a letter to a number of churches (including the one at Hlulabantu) asking Christians if they would offer to help by becoming host families (taking children from Mseleni Children's Home during the holidays to give them an experience of Christian family life), or temporary emergency carers, or foster parents for children who do not have any family able to foster them. Then in December, Bongi and Rachel were at the Annual General Church Conference of the Africa Evangelical Church in Eastern Cape. One lunch time as they perched on a wall chatting, Bongi, with tears in her eyes, shared with Rachel that as she had sat under the ministry of God's Word, she really felt that God was laying on her heart to take in a foster child.

One evening in January Rachel was working late in the office when Saziso, one of the coordinators also working late, came in and told her that he had come



across a desperate situation and was not sure of the way forward. He had found a 16 year old girl living alone. She had been orphaned some years before, and had been living with family, but relationships had broken down, and she had been completely rejected by the family. Obviously the situation needed investigating, but in the meantime this girl was very vulnerable. The Children's Home was full. Where could we put her? At that point, Rachel remembered Bongi's desire to serve as a foster parent.

The LK social worker was able to follow through the due processes, and this young girl has been placed in Bongi's care. The following Sunday when it was testimony time at Hlulabantu, Bongi, with a wide smile, gave thanks that God had increased her family in a wonderful way, and introduced her new child to the church. After the service Rachel chatted with the girl, who was very happy to be there and a part of Bongi's family. She has had a tough time, and there are a lot of issues to work through. We pray that as she experiences the love of this family, and as part of the wider family of God's people worshipping at Hlulabantu, that she will feel at home, and will herself come to saving faith. ■



Mtwara Youth Center

By Johan and Trudie Robbertze - Tanzania

In Tanzania approximately 60% of the total population is under the age of 15. Many of these children in the south leave school at the age of 12 or even younger. Understandably it leads to young boys and girls roaming the streets aimlessly getting involved in "negative recreation" (drugs, violence or sexual activities).

Since our arrival more than 10 years ago we have been busy in various ministries which mostly involve children's work: weekly children's clubs, teaching religious classes at primary schools and teaching life skills classes at a secondary school. We have seen many children's lives change. As our focus was mainly on the primary school level, we have always felt a need for Teen workers. Like many of us can witness, once again God has made the visionary the "missionary"... our dream has become our passion!

Having said all this, we want to share our specific vision for the youth of Mtwara region. It includes a YOUTH DEVELOPMENT CENTRE where we can focus on sharing basic necessary life values with the adults of to-morrow... proper relationships, taking responsibility, showing respect to others, self-control... The course, Life at the Cross Roads, has been implemented in various countries to help form the youth's ethical values. This material has been used for the last 4 years at Mustafa Sabodo Educational Centre in Mtwara and includes different aspects of Life Skills. We also envision challenging the leaders of to-morrow with "Problem

Solving Skills" by overcoming certain obstacles in a series of physical challenges set out in a "play park" environment. We can only dream of building a nation when we start by building the children's characters.

Our idea is to invite schools and different churches to select students/leaders and to send them for a time, say three to five days, to the centre to receive the above mentioned instruction. A reachable goal when God is in it... lives can be changed!

Ground has been obtained from a local church, but there are still some legal aspects which need to be addressed before this dream can become reality. Please pray with us for this humanly impossible dream to become a possible Godly solution to the youth in the south of Tanzania. ■



Who we Are

This is your invitation to become a partner with us as we prepare, send and support men and women who cross cultural boundaries and take the Good News of God's love to people groups around the world.

The mission of SIM is to fulfil the Great Commission of our Lord Jesus Christ to "... go and make disciples of all nations, baptising them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, and teaching them to obey everything I have commanded you..." Matt 28:19, 20 NIV
 We fulfil this command by evangelising the unreached, ministering to human needs, discipling believers into churches and equipping churches to fulfil Christ's commission.

For over 120 years SIM has facilitated the sending out and support of missionaries, currently in over 60 countries around the world. At present there are 90 missionaries serving through SIM SA working in South Africa

Mozambique, Namibia, Tanzania, Zambia, Zimbabwe, Senegal, Paraguay, Peru and countries in Asia. Your partnership will assist us to prepare and send out more workers to go and share the Gospel with many who have not yet heard and help facilitate the care and ministry of those serving in South Africa. ■



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