

# **SIM** *now*

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## From the Director's Desk



Looking back at the year 2015, the challenges presented to us by the world are overwhelming. Islamic militants further destabilized their neighbourhoods, and eventually spilled across national borders with many lives being brutally taken and many people affected. Political instability and economic crisis have been the results of these acts of terror. ISIS, Boko Haram and other militant groups and individuals continue to harass those who do not agree with them.

This has resulted in the plight of refugees which has become a global problem with many different responses to it. Thousands flee violence and persecution in their homelands and become people with no status at all. They experience severe hardships on their journey to 'freedom,' facing death and sometimes a hostile welcome. They face torture, terror, and hopelessness. Even after reaching safety on the other side, there is still fear and loneliness and the challenge of starting a new life with nothing.

The state of a refugee reminds me of Jesus' parable of a Good Samaritan. A man was robbed, beaten and left to die. He was stripped of his dignity and humanity by the robbers. We do not have enough strength in ourselves to combat these forces. We can only turn to Jesus and learn from him and the way he taught about the man who was left alone to die on the road to Jericho. Jesus teaches us two main truths about this parable: we ought to love and be good to those who are destitute and always to be concerned about their eternal destiny.

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Here in South Africa, different uprisings such as the recent '#feesmustfall' on university campuses, service delivery protests, communities seeking to take the law into their own hands because of lawlessness, crime and corruption are all great reminders that we haven't arrived yet. We are called not to lose hope but to pray for these things and that those in authority will have wisdom from God to deal with these problems. Martin Luther once said the following about Christians and prayer: "Christians who pray are like pillars, carrying the roof of the world". This reminds me of our SIM tagline 'By Prayer' which is a reminder for all of us to pray all the time and in all circumstances.

A question that keeps on coming to mind is: Could these challenges of life be an opportunity for us to reflect and respond? SIM's Purpose Statement brings this to the fore and reminds us of the need to reach people who are living and dying without the saving knowledge of our Lord Jesus Christ. As we prepare to celebrate Christmas, it cannot escape our minds that Jesus Christ, whose birth we celebrate on Christmas Day, came to seek and save the lost. His death on the cross was the only way which God, could reconcile us to himself. We need to ask ourselves how we can make our Christmas faith real in a world that is hurting.

In this issue of SIMNow you will read more about our work with refugees and other stories telling of what God is doing in this world through SIM.

Thank you for your partnership in the Gospel. Please continue to pray for us as a mission organization and for our missionaries that through our ministries Christ, the Light of the world will shine through many lives.

May the peace and blessings of Christmas be yours; and may the coming year be filled with happiness. ■

Siegfried Ngubane

## From Canada to South Africa

Tamas is from Alberta, Western Canada. He has a Certified General Accountant degree and many years of experience. Tamas came to SA to serve as an accountant at the Khaya Centre in May 2015 for three months. This is his story:

I am Tamas Lukacs. I volunteered as a short-termer recently at the Khaya Centre in Lehae, Johannesburg, South Africa.

Here are some brief comments about my experiences. Although I supported missions previously, for the most part missions were a distant concept to me until sensing God's direction in my life and getting involved last year with SIM Canada.

At first it was difficult for me to imagine how the LORD could use the skills and gifts He has given to me in the area of administration/finance/accounting, to make a valuable difference for His Kingdom in missions. Little did I know that nothing is impossible with God!

The Khaya Centre is located in the community of Lehae, Johannesburg, South Africa. This community is plagued by high unemployment, crime, HIV/AIDS and other social problems. The Centre reaches out mainly to the many orphans residing in the community who are left to care for themselves as a result of losing their family members to the HIV/AIDS pandemic. The Centre provides food, clothing, medical care, support groups, early childhood development classes, a victims empowerment programme, after school care, computer classes, spiritual care and other assistance to those who are unable to provide for themselves and their families. The Centre is an outreach of the Mount Olive Church that meets on the premises. SIM is a close partner with the Khaya Centre in moving the LORD's Kingdom forward by ministering to the poor and needy in this part of the world. God is active in this community as He is around the world. The needs are great and many - they are all around us - are we listening to Him and seeing with the eyes of Jesus?



The LORD continues to bring people to the Centre who are seeking assistance, initially to meet their physical needs, and the people working at the Centre are able to minister to them. By God's grace the volunteers and workers are able to introduce the poor and needy to Jesus, who can take care of our greatest need. As is the case in many parts of the world, people's real needs (spiritual) are often masked by physical needs/challenges. I am truly blessed to have seen lives being transformed by our LORD and needs met in direct answer to prayer and as those who are blessed materially give. I have met several people who were former clients of the Centre and now, as a result of God's work in their lives, are volunteering and working at the Centre, telling their

stories to others and helping others, impacting lives for Christ.

My initial missions focus was to set up a new accounting system for the Centre. However, the LORD has provided many other opportunities to minister. I was asked to share at several churches in Johannesburg and saw people

come to Christ - what an amazing experience! All glory to God! I also ministered to people at the Centre as well as to friends in the community. As it turned out, the accounting project was only a small part of what the LORD wanted to accomplish during His mission. He accomplished far more than I could have ever imagined. ■





# Meet Dwight and Dorothy Hazard

by a SIM Missionary

On 1st October, we welcomed Dwight Hazard into the SIM SA office in his new role as Director of Operations. We are delighted to have Dwight and Dorothy with us and believe that they will be a blessing to all SIM SA personnel wherever they are serving because of the gifts and experience that they bring. SIMply SA spent a little time chatting to Dwight so that we could introduce him to you all properly. Maybe in coming months, we will have the opportunity to do the same with Dorothy. In the meantime, this is Dwight's angle on their story...

Dwight was born and raised in a farming family in North Dakota, USA. Like many children growing up on large farms, he spent happy days playing on tractors and learning to find a way to fix just about anything. It was a childhood with a practical philosophy and still something of a pioneer feel as his great-grandparents had been amongst the first settlers to the area.

At university, Dwight studied Photo-engineering and Electronics, cutting edge technology for its time. Even more exciting for him was that he met Dorothy through mutual friends in their first week at university.

International travel was a feature of Dwight's working life even as a young graduate. His first job was with a Belgian company who sent him to the USSR to install equipment for the 1980 Moscow Olympics. He and Dorothy were already engaged by this stage and were married 8 months later, returning to Belgium as a married couple. They took the opportunities available to travel around Europe, but their history of abrupt exits and visa difficulties seem to have begun around this stage. Dwight was never able to get a work permit for Belgium and eventually had to return to the USA. Travel in those less security-conscious days was a little less stressful, and he was even known to take a fully equipped toolbox onto flights as carry-on luggage. Useful in the event of any mechanical problems!

Dorothy had become a Christian before Dwight left for Belgium, and during his time in Belgium before they were married, Dwight also came to know the Lord. The international connection was evident here as well – Dorothy came to faith through her brother who was converted whilst working in Ghana as a Peace Corps Volunteer, coaching the Ghanaian national women's basketball team. He improved their basketball skills, they led him to the Lord.

Back in the USA, they settled into married life and their first child, Joshua, was born towards the end of 1983. Rather unexpectedly and against all the odds, Dorothy fell



pregnant again very rapidly, with twins. After a month in hospital following the start of premature labour, Dwight and Dorothy became parents of twin girls, Rebeka and Jessica, born three months prematurely and weighing in around the 1kg mark. The first three months of their life was spent in neonatal intensive care, and life for the Hazard family passed in a blur of hospital visits, paediatric appointments and specialist care, whilst trying to maintain normality for young Joshua.

As time passed, Rebeka progressed well, but Jessica failed to thrive with a range of health issues. With three children under the age of 2, sleep was a rare event and hospital visits were all too frequent. Eventually, after many tests, at the age of 18 months Jessica tested positive for HIV/AIDS, contracted from contaminated blood received in a transfusion. (Screening for blood started not long afterwards.) Jessica died shortly after her second birthday. The support from their local church was overwhelming, in spite of the fact that at this stage there was still much ignorance of the virus and much prejudice towards those who were infected. This support meant that Jessica was lavished with love and attention for all of her very brief life, and the family was blessed by the care from their church family.

Following this, life settled into a new normality, but Dwight and Dorothy were aware of a sense of God working in their lives as they began to question their work and life setting. After hearing an advertisement on a Christian radio station for a Christian placement organisation, they sent off an application and, a week later, received a long list of possibilities. For a technical expert and a teacher who were willing to go anywhere,

there appeared to be many open doors. However, all these opportunities required applicants to raise their own support. Dwight and Dorothy were unwilling to do that, having seen the hand to mouth existence of friends who were supported on that basis. The papers were put to one side.

A week later, they received a letter from SIM suggesting the possibility of working with a radio station in Liberia. Dwight was excited about this possibility. Dorothy did not share this excitement. With Psalm 37:4 in mind, that night she prayed that God would change Dwight's heart in order to give her the desires of her heart, which were to return to their university town for Dwight to pursue lecturing there. On Dwight's return from work the next day, he found that Dorothy and the children had been to their local library and taken out every book they could find relating to Liberia (a children's book, an ancient tome and a government pamphlet), and her heart was now set on going. God had indeed been at work changing the desires of the heart.

The SIM application process ensued, with attendance at candidate orientation and acceptance as SIM members. Within a year they had raised their support and were ready to go, a real testimony to the power of God, considering that their church was not particularly mission minded.

In August 1989, Dwight, Dorothy, Joshua and Rebeka arrived at ELWA radio station in Liberia, a well-established mission community. At this time, missionaries there formed a tight community with few close relationships with anyone else. A year later, they were evacuated due to political uprising. They spent a year at SIM in Charlotte, USA before returning to Liberia. After another year they were evacuated again, and assigned to permanent home staff.

However, three and a half years later, God called the Hazard family to Nigeria. Dwight served there as Operations Manager initially, before being seconded to Hillcrest School, where Dorothy took on the role of librarian while he taught graphic design and technology, as well as helping with crisis management. They spent seven years in Nigeria, seeing their children through high school education before returning to the US for the beginning of university. During this home assignment period, the role Dwight had been filling in Nigeria was re-allocated by the organisation to which he had been seconded, and they found themselves in limbo, praying and waiting.

After four weeks of wondering where they would be next, SIM International asked Dorothy if she would start a Short Term programme in Kenya, and so they returned to Africa, continuing their move eastwards across the continent. During the next few years, the Short Term programme went from strength to strength, with around 120 short termers passing through, along with several teams. After a few years, the Kenyan Area Director moved on, and Dwight took on this role with

responsibility also for Uganda and Tanzania, as well as having oversight for the closed countries of Eritrea and Somalia. It was a time of change as they restructured the work into team-based operations, and also began to see Kenyans beginning to serve in missions.

At the end of the term, Dwight and Dorothy decided not to continue for a second term for a variety of reasons, among which was Dorothy's health, as she was struggling with depression at that time. Dwight returned to media work, using his background in photography. These two years were a healing time for them, with less stress, after the high levels of pressure that accompany the role of Area Director. They had begun to consider whether they might move back to the USA to be closer to family, especially their grandchildren, when they were approached by SIM SA at the end of January 2015. After an exchange of emails and several conversations, they came to Cape Town in March to meet with the SIM Board... and the rest is history yet to be written!

## SIMnow asked Dwight for a few prayer points:

- for wisdom and discernment in establishing exactly what his role is and in defining wise priorities.
- for Dorothy's feet to continue to heal well. They are thankful for access to good health care and for the progress made.
- for clarity and wisdom in defining Dorothy's role.

## We also asked him a very important question...

### Rugby or American football?

The first game of rugby they ever watched was South Africa versus Japan. They have since begun to pick up something of the rules but are still smarting a little from the South Africa versus USA game. Don't tell their fellow Americans, but Dwight is showing signs of becoming a lover of the game.

Then we checked up on his South African vocabulary. Dwight scored full marks on braai, tekkies, bakkie and biltong. Mahala was new to him, but he has learnt that there is a difference between just now, now, and now now. And he knows that if the answer is "just now", he has time to go and brew some coffee. ■



# Filled and Skilled

by a SIM Missionary

**Q:** What has 18 legs and can rewire your house, mend your plumbing and fix your leaky roof?

**A:** The LIFT (Labour In Faith & Trust) team from Northern Ireland



From 12 to 24 October the SIM Southern Africa guest house in Tokai was filled with the sounds of hammers and power tools as a team of men from Northern Ireland carried out some much needed maintenance. Top of the list was the top of the house, where the flat roof was in need of some attention to deal with the leaks. The sunshine and dry weather helped with this task. Elsewhere, a shower was fitted, lights replaced and the outside staircase given some much-needed repair. In addition to this, the team spent some time at the mission house currently occupied by our Short Term Co-ordinator, Peter Burke and his wife Kelly, doing maintenance there. Both houses were also given a fresh coat of exterior paint, which was an unexpected bonus.

LIFT was founded in Northern Ireland in 1999 by two men from the building sector who realised that the gifts they have are much in demand by churches and mission organisations around the world. Gary Moore and John Purse set up LIFT after a trip to Guinea-Bissau where they led a team working alongside a local church to complete a church building. Since it was founded, LIFT has taken hundreds of volunteers to projects in 37 countries around the world. Although most LIFT teams are involved in construction work, they also regularly send out medical teams to Colombia and also to SIM's Galmi Hospital in Niger. LIFT has worked with SIM in a number of other locations including France and Madagascar.

Alongside this particular LIFT team have been Ken and Freda Vallely, former (and future) guest house managers in Cape Town, who have provided that useful South African-Northern Irish link (and) translation service – it is important to know the difference between “just now” and “now now”!

Our South African LIFT team had 51 previous projects between them and was made up of:

**WALTER MAGUIRE**, a LIFT veteran with 20 previous projects. This is his fifth LIFT trip to South Africa, but his first to Cape Town, and his second project of 2015. Walter is an example of what happens when you say “no thanks” to God... having said that he never wanted to visit Africa, he has now been on LIFT teams to North Africa, Senegal, South Africa, Niger and

Kenya, as well as Israel and Lebanon. He is married to Corona with four grown-up children and eight grand-children.

**BRIAN MCCORMICK** is no stranger to South Africa, having spent two years here with LIFT and Out of Africa Mission. He is a joiner by trade, running his own building company, thus bringing a valuable set of skills to the team. His wife is Gillian and they have two grown-up children.

**JOHN ROBINSON**, another LIFT veteran with eight previous projects behind him, was on his second trip of the year. He is married to Maureen with two grown-up children.

**STEPHEN SHANKS** was on his fourth LIFT project. He is a mechanical engineer by profession and was keen to contribute to the work of the SIM guest house after hearing about it from Ken Vallely.

**ALASTAIR HENRY** has worked for SIM in the UK in the past, but this was his first LIFT project. With both electrical and plumbing skills, he was a real asset to the team on this particular project.

**TERRY FUSCO**, leaving his wife Caroline behind for the second time this year after a LIFT team to Argentina in July, wanted to support the work of SIM by using the skills he has in this way.

**JOHN STRATTON** also has several previous LIFT teams under his belt, but this was his first time in South Africa. He is heading to Niger with LIFT two weeks after returning from South Africa. He is married to Betty and they have two grown-up children.

**BETTY STRATTON** joined her husband on a project for the very first time. She was able to help Freda Vallely with cooking the large amounts of food that hard working

craftsmen need. We are glad that Betty came because otherwise she would barely have seen her husband for the rest of the year!

**RICHARD MCGAUGHEY** was also a LIFT first-timer, although he has served on teams in England. An electrician by trade, his professional skills were put to good use. He is married to Louise.



The sacrificial servant hearts of these brothers and sister have been a real blessing and encouragement to SIM Southern Africa. We know that they have raised funds, given up annual leave time and left behind family in order to serve in this way. They have worked long and hard in unfamiliar circumstances and made a huge difference to the two mission houses in Cape Town.

The LIFT motto is “The Lord God, whom we serve, is able”. We join them in saying a heart-felt “Amen” to that as we thank God for sending this team to us. ■



Working in  
Partnership  
with **SIM**







# Working with Students Mexico



By Emma Brewster, Cape Town

In July I had the wonderful privilege of spending 10 days with 1200 students and student workers from 157 countries in Oaxtepec, Mexico at the International Fellowship of Evangelical Students (IFES) World Assembly. This happens every four years; it was a little foretaste of heaven. IFES ([www.ifesworld.org](http://www.ifesworld.org)) is an international movement that has been pioneering student groups throughout many countries since 1947. God is doing amazing things in the universities, bringing many to a living faith in Christ. It was humbling to hear of the impact of violence and suffering on our campuses through what happened at Garissa University in Kenya earlier this year; (on line you can follow [this link](#) to hear students' testimonies and pray). It was also heart breaking to hear of some countries closer to home in southern Africa which are wrestling with the impact of the prosperity gospel. Pray for wisdom and discernment that the Lord would raise up the right workers

to send, partnering our brothers and sisters so that students might be nurtured in their faith and grow deeper in their commitment to follow Christ. There was also a research track at the conference for those doing Masters and PhDs. This was a new addition and so critical in helping us all think about the huge impact we can have as Christians, engaging in the academic faculties, to be people of influence in key areas of academic research in our world. My prayer is that there would be more students who consider doing further research with a missional mindset.

World Assembly was a great place for meeting up with new faces and reconnecting with old. There were many opportunities to network with those that are working in SIM countries and to consider how we can partner one another. This past month I have been in Asia picking up on some of these connections. Pray for our work in Thailand – we are going to be pioneering into the universities and there

are a number of exciting opportunities to go to some of the least reached areas of the country. Thailand is a Buddhist nation with 0.7% Christian. The door is wide open and we long to see many Thai students having an opportunity to hear about Jesus. We have opportunities in teaching English and doing student ministry on campus as well as opportunities for others to come to lecture.

After World Assembly I spent 5 days with the Mexican IFES, COMPA, helping 24 of their staff and students think about how they could be pioneering outreach to international students who come to study in Mexico. The opportunities we have globally to reach out to them are huge as they are often more open to the Gospel outside of their home context, a pattern we see clearly in the Acts conversions. Do pray for COMPA as they start up this ministry.

This past month I also took part in facilitating a Lausanne International Student Forum in Singapore where we brought together 70 international student workers from 17 countries in the Asia-Pacific region to consider the great phenomenon of international students specifically going to Asian universities. It was an exciting few days thinking about the huge impact we could have in reaching the nations for Christ. Pray for these student workers that they will be able to impact the world on their doorstep; and pray for South Africa as well as we will be receiving thousands of international students in the new year. We are one of the top destinations in Africa and the church is still asleep to this incredible mission field.

God is on the move in our universities across the globe; pray that in 2016 we would see many more come to know Jesus, living their lives in service to Him wherever He might call them. ■





# University Campus Zambia

## Building Relationship with Students

Diane Vos is a South African SIM missionary currently serving in Lusaka, Zambia. She has linked up with Navigators who are active on the local university campus. The Zambian academic year is from August to July.

There is a big utilitarian house on the university campus crammed with first-year students, part of the campus female accommodation. There are about 40 of them and they sleep two to a bed. I went there in November last year to see if I could recruit about 7 girls to start an investigative Bible study. Only four girls came the first week after I had spoken to about 10 students. At the last Bible study of the year only one girl came. I was really discouraged. I wondered if I should be doing student ministry at all.

When we started again in January, I was surprised to find three or four girls coming each week. We were investigating who Jesus is from the book of John. My goal was for them to understand what it means to commit their lives to Christ and to understand their need of Him. I would love to do a long-term Bible study with them during all their years at university, but I am not sure if they will commit to a long term Bible study. They all come from different church backgrounds and I don't know yet where they all are spiritually. God is helping me see that just being part of their spiritual journey is a

privilege. I have realised that I should be grateful that I can help them find out more about who Jesus really is each time we meet. I also realise that what happens in their spiritual lives now and in the future is finally determined by God, not me, but I get to be part of what God is doing in their lives.

Just before Easter, I finished the study by doing a presentation of the gospel. I explained how sin separates us from God and that God provided a way back to Himself through Jesus. Two girls came to that session. At the end, they prayed for assurance that they had received Christ. I left them, praying that God would help them fully understand the meaning of Easter during the break time.

After the third term began, I went with reservations to find out whether the two girls would be interested in continuing to meet for Bible study. I found them in the house and we went outside to chat. To my surprise, they both said that they felt they had grown spiritually because of the Bible studies we had done together. They were willing to continue meeting and



studying the Bible. I was buoyed up with enthusiasm at their response and excited to continue the Bible study with them.

However, on the day we were scheduled to meet during the next week, only one of them came. The other girl was writing a test that day.

There are all sorts of ongoing challenges like these to building relationships with students on campus and trying to help them grow spiritually. Sometimes it is an incredibly fulfilling and exciting experience and sometimes it is deeply discouraging. God is helping me see that just being part of the spiritual journey of some of these girls is a privilege. I am grateful that I can help them find out more about who Jesus really is each time we meet. Whatever happens in their spiritual lives in the future is in God's hands, and I need to entrust my small part to Him. ■

Annie is a first-year student who lives in a big house on campus with 40 other girls. When I visited there to recruit girls for an investigative Bible study, Annie said she wanted to serve God. We meet one-on-one for Bible study each Thursday. Often I wonder if she is going to come. She went into town one day when we were to meet and was delayed coming back. Another time, her aunt was sick in hospital and her family called on her to visit and care for the aunt.

It's a roller-coaster ride wondering if I will see Annie again, yet every time we meet and study the Bible, I can see light bulbs coming on over her head as she learns new things about God. At these times, we are both blessed!





# Pointing to CHRIST- THE ONLY WAY

by a SIM Missionary

We have all heard various reports of current terrorist violence in Islamic countries and I wondered what impact this had on local South African Muslims. Granted, my small contribution to Muslim ministry in SA is limited and subjective, but I have chatted to colleagues doing similar ministry in other parts of the country, as well as swapping notes with missionaries from other mission organisations, and a definite pattern is emerging.

To help you see this pattern, I need to share some history of how the Qur'an was compiled. The Qur'an is a collection of sayings and visions of the Prophet Muhammad and these are divided roughly into two sections: a) Meccan revelations, visions which came to Muhammad in the early days when he lived in Mecca. It was a brief time in history when Jews, Christians and Muslims got on reasonably well together. Muhammad's messages were moderate, peaceful, tolerant and promoted cooperation with those of other faiths.

b) Medinan revelations, visions which came later when Muhammad moved to Medina. Muhammad wanted to expand Islam and marched against Medina, which took one look at the large invading army and surrendered without any casualties. Muhammad took this easy takeover as a sign from God to continue expanding, but other areas were not so accommodating and resisted fiercely resulting in many wars. At this stage, Muhammad's sayings and

visions became more violent and dictatorial.

After Muhammad's death late in the 7th century, all his sayings and visions were collated, forming today's Qur'an, but the chapters were arranged in order of length rather than in date order or by theme (Surah 2 being the longest and the last Surah or chapter 114 being the shortest). So the Meccan and Medinan writings were thoroughly mixed together, and this obviously caused a number of contradictions. "Live peaceably with Jews and people of the book" and "death to the infidel (ie non-Muslim)" is an extreme example. Muslim scholars deal with these contradictions according to the Law of Abrogation which simply put is that the latest verse is the one to follow and obey. (Similarly, Muslims revere Moses and David as prophets, and even acknowledge Jesus as a great prophet, but Muhammad was the LAST prophet so they follow him first). As lay Muslims do not know when the various Qur'anic chapters were written, they rely on the Muslim leadership to advise them.

What does all this have to do with today? Many Muslims in South Africa (and elsewhere) including

some of the leaders, are embarrassed about the violence and the resulting negative publicity which Islam is receiving. Their claim of "Islam is a peaceful religion and those perpetuating violence are not true Muslims" is no longer believed, even amongst themselves. So in their Friday mosque services, a number of liberal or moderate Imams are now preaching from the earlier texts in the Qur'an, urging their congregations not to add to the violence but strive for peace in their suburbs. But many educated Muslims are asking "What about the Law of Abrogation which we have followed for centuries?" and are not content with the feedback they are getting from their leaders. Muslims are not allowed to question



the Qur'an or Muhammad or ask searching questions of their leadership, but many Muslim individuals are quietly looking around them for folk they can trust to ask about faith issues. They are wary of pastors and missionaries but are having earnest conversations with real Christians in the workplace, classroom or neighbourhood. World events are turning regular Muslims into "Truth Seekers" and the Bible assures us that if we seek God with all our heart, we WILL find Him.

This simplistic overview of history


and subjective interpretation of current events will not solve the problems of the Middle East or the world. And this is only one aspect of a myriad of complicated issues adding fuel to the terrorism in these last days. But this pattern of Muslims becoming disillusioned with Islam and seeking God and truth is an emerging pattern in various places in SA and is found in reports from international missionaries in Africa, Asia and the Middle East. God is bringing good out of evil situations and establishing His Kingdom.

So let us who bear the name of Jesus and are saved by His grace alone, live in such a way that those around us will see Him in us and be drawn to Him. Let us be prepared to point them to Him who is The Way, The Truth and The Life. ■

1 Peter 3:15 "But in your hearts, set apart Christ as Lord. Always be prepared to give an answer to everyone who asks you to give the reason for the hope that you have. But do this with gentleness and respect."







# 'LOVE of Strangers'

by a SIM Missionary

Four years ago South Africa had the highest number of asylum seekers in the world. Now Europe is inundated by a monumental wave of refugees. Whether in Europe or South Africa, the refugee crisis poses a challenge to us as Christians, “Will we show hospitality – ‘love foreigners’ – as God does?” (Deuteronomy 10:18-19) Will we love people regardless of whether they are victims of oppression, economic migrants or even enemies (covert jihadis). The biblical mandate to show love spans all these groups, bearing in mind that some radical Muslims are accepting the Lord Jesus as Saviour.

Muslims make up a disproportionately high percentage of refugees around the world. Here in South Africa we see significant numbers from the Middle East but we have far more from Pakistan, Bangladesh and Somalia, as well as many Muslims from across the continent of Africa. Let us not forget that sectarian conflict and resurgent radical Islam are key factors fuelling this mass migration of Muslims.

It is no coincidence that Muslims who are fleeing from their homelands are **seeking** refuge mostly in the western, so-called Christian world. Throughout this article I have been **seeking** to help us make sense of the civil wars, toppled regimes and tumultuous events across the Middle East over the last few years.

Two Scriptures shed light on these trends: Acts 17: 26-27 and Daniel 2:20-21. These passages, as quoted, tell us that God oversees world events so as to nudge people to **seek** Him, “*From one man He has made every nationality to live over the whole earth and has determined their appointed times and the boundaries of where they live. He did this so they might seek God, and perhaps they might reach out and find Him, though He is not far from each one of us.*” “*Praise the name of God forever and ever, for He has all wisdom and power. He controls the course of world events; He removes kings and sets up other kings.*”

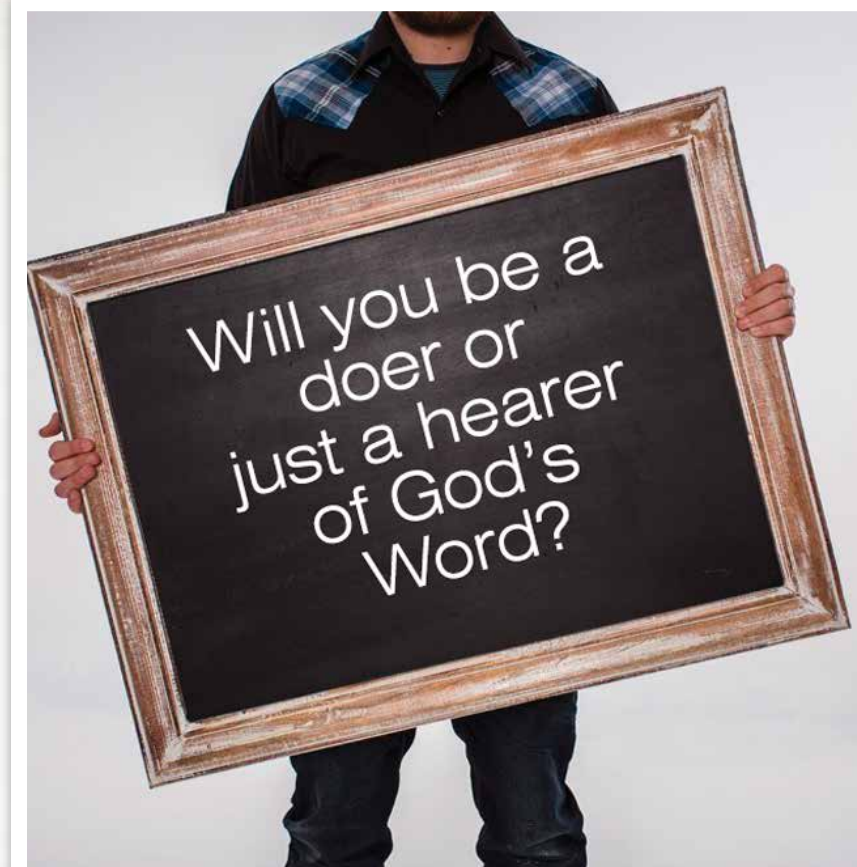
Psalms 83 is another passage which shows God's providential working in the Middle East causing people to **seek** Him. The psalmist prays against God's enemies, asking Him to “*pursue them with your tempest and terrify them with your hurricane! Fill their faces with shame, that they may seek your name, O Lord. Let them be put to shame ... that they may know that you alone, whose name is the Lord, are the Most High over all the earth.*” (Psalms 83:15-18, notice that almost all of the nations listed in this Psalm correspond with Islamic nations in the Middle East today, cf. Isaiah 26:9-11,16)

It is not only the Bible which teaches God's sovereignty over nations and urges God-fearing people to **seek** His face. The Qur'an has a similar teaching: “Do not drive away those who supplicate their Lord morning and evening desiring His face.” (Surah 6:52, Online Qur'an Project) In recent years many Muslims have become disillusioned and are **seeking** God's face, so much so that unprecedented numbers now believe Jesus is God's unique Messiah, the Saviour of the world.

With a better understanding of these current trends, the question remains, “What are we going to do about it?” Scripture commends the men of Issachar, not only for understanding their times, but knowing what Israel should do! (2 Chronicles 12:32) Will you be a doer or just a hearer of God's Word?

Will you join us in prayer, for the many Muslims who are **seeking** asylum in “Christian” nations, including South Africa? Pray that they experience Christ's love through His followers who need to show genuine hospitality, literally ‘love of strangers’. Are you willing to go out of your way to meet and befriend refugees in your city? Also you may want to read a short article entitled, *What causes us to seek God* which is written for Muslims. Consider sharing it with a friend. ■

It is available online here: [www.answering-islam.org/authors/clarke//seek\\_god.html](http://www.answering-islam.org/authors/clarke//seek_god.html).





## Help us Share the Message

"Every local church should be a World Mission Strategy Centre," said by a well renowned author. SIM would like to see many more 'Mission Focused' churches and individuals in line with the Great Commission and we need your help to achieve this.

We have a wonderful story to tell about how a young man, Rowland Bingham, had a vision to reach the lost tribes of Africa with the Good News and as a result, SIM was established some 120 years ago.

### HOW YOU CAN HELP?

#### *Arrange for a SIM Representative to visit your church.*

We would love to have a missionary or representative from SIM speak at a service or meeting at your church. If you would like to arrange, this contact our office.

#### *Pay us a visit.*

SIM would be happy for a group from your church to visit our offices located in Tokai, Cape Town. Feel free to contact our office to arrange a tour.

#### *Become a SIM volunteer.*

If you feel called to volunteer some time in our office in Tokai, please contact us. We have a number of different opportunities for you!

#### *Become a SIM representative or SIM prayer partner.*

We need people throughout South Africa to represent SIM in their local church or to pray for SIM missionaries or lead a SIM prayer meeting.

Please contact John Berry on 021 715 3200 or Email: [za.stewardship@sim.org](mailto:za.stewardship@sim.org)

*We pray the Lord Jesus will bless you and use you to be a blessing to others.*

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