

SIM **now**

When the “Bread of Life” also fills breadbaskets

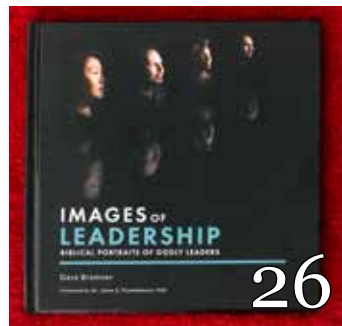
Pray Today now on PrayerMate

Continuing 129 years of ministry in SIM’s first location, Nigeria

Opportunities every day

Why I wrote *Images of Leadership*

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From the Director

Dear friends of SIM Southern Africa,

As we grapple with war and its impact on food and fuel prices, with the disastrous floods in KwaZulu-Natal that brought death and despair, and with so much more, we can feel that every direction we turn needs so much more than we can give, making us grow tired and weary.

Yet God has never asked for more than five loaves and two fish or a handful of flour and a little bit of oil—never to take away from us so that we are left without but that He might create an opportunity to give us so much more. May you seize every opportunity to demonstrate the love of God for each of us during these trying times.

“Let’s not become discouraged in doing good, for in due time we will reap, if we do not become weary.”
 – Galatians 6:9 (NASB)

SIM continues in the long tradition of recognizing the importance of prayer and how to better serve that most precious investment in our ministry by making sure that 1000’s of our prayer partners are now able to take advantage of a digital version of our *Pray Today* newsletter being available through the *PrayerMate* app.

You will be encouraged that we are still ministering where it all began in Nigeria and will realise that these beloved people are still in need of the love of God as they were when our founding fathers first arrived there in 1893.

Like music, sports is one of those activities that appears to be a universal way to communicate. Although it has no unique language or accent, it allows us to speak across cultures, as you will read of in the lives of our missionaries serving in sport ministries.

Every day, 690 million people worldwide will go to bed on an empty stomach, and that is projected to be 840 million by 2030. Hunger is about so much more than going to be bed without food. In our cover story, you will read of its impact on societies and the devastating consequences, but you will also read of the gospel and how it

changes that narrative through hope in Jesus Christ and by equipping people to farm.

Our missionaries continue to flourish and impact that ever-changing landscape of Christian leadership, as author and Leadership Development practitioner Dave Bremner introduces you to his recently published book, *Images of Leadership: Biblical Portraits of Godly Leaders*.

What’s in your hand? Perhaps a ladle as you learn how to make Isigwaqane, or the equipping with which God has blessed you to meet your needs? Our missionaries discover God’s love in the most intriguing ways and use them as opportunities to share His love.

Every one of these missionaries who has a story to tell also has a truth to share about why they have chosen to serve Christ by sharing the love of God to the people to whom God has called them.

“and pray in my behalf, that speech may be given to me in the opening of my mouth, to make known with boldness the mystery of the gospel”
 – Ephesians 6:19 (NASB)

Whenever you pray, I encourage you to pray for the ministry of SIM. Pray for the almost 4000 missionaries that serve in over 70 countries, sharing and demonstrating God’s love for those who are living and dying without Jesus. Partner with us and witness the Gospel preached among all nations.

For Christ alone,

Benjamin Pillay

Rev. Benjamin Pillay,
 SIM Southern Africa Director



Pray Today now on PrayerMate

By Brian Heffron, SIM South Africa Communications Manager

Throughout SIM's 129 years of ministry, we have always relied on the Lord's response to the faithful prayers of our members, supporters and friends. Sharing the details of our praises and petitions, our celebrations and needs has been an essential aspect of our work, witness and lives.

To help our partners better pray with us and to reach a wider audience of praying believers, our monthly prayer newsletter, *Pray Today*, is now also being published on *PrayerMate*, a mobile app available for Android and Apple devices.

Many of our readers may already be familiar with *PrayerMate*, which is used by some churches and Christian organisations in South Africa. The free app allows users to select and receive feeds from churches, Christian organisations and individuals for whom they want to pray.

"In total [worldwide], it's just passed 500 000 downloads in the last couple of weeks, which is quite an amazing milestone," said its creator, Andy Geer, of London, UK.

Geer said that about 700 entities, including about 300 churches, publish prayer feeds to the app.

"*PrayerMate* itself is used all over lots of different countries. Probably the US is our biggest user base, but there's quite a lot in any English-speaking countries in particular, and now it's in French and German as well, so spreading it further," Geer said.

Although usage here remains modest, South Africa has the app's fifth-largest user base behind the US, UK, Australia and Canada.

Geer was a Bible college student and IT worker



Discipleship Tech founder and CEO Andy Geer.

when he created the app eleven years ago. Inspired by D.A. Carson's prayer folders discussed in his book *A Call to Spiritual Reformation: Priorities from Paul and His Prayers*, Geer wanted to pray more regularly for others. However, he found it tricky to keep track of whom he had already prayed for and what their requests were, and he also found his prayers sometimes became repetitive.

"The other problem is an email inbox full of prayer letters from missionaries that when you have opened your email, you're just totally in the wrong mindset, because it's quite an admin-oriented kind of environment ... I wasn't necessarily there to pray, but then when I did come to pray for those people on my prayer list, I found I'd long since sort of forgotten what they'd asked for," Geer said.

He thought an app that would both remind him who to pray for and what to pray for them could be a big help to him and others struggling similarly. At first, it was simply a list and schedule, filled only with things Geer wrote himself. Later, he added the ability for other entities to publish feeds that people could subscribe to, and it started to grow in popularity. Within a few years, Geer and his wife Elise made the leap of faith for him to do this full-time and established Discipleship Tech as a charity to manage it.

"Our mission statement as a charity is 'using technology to help people grow in their love for Jesus,' and I think we see that with *PrayerMate*, that as people pray and as people are encouraged seeing their prayers answered, that's huge. Our prayer life is such a vital part of our relationship with God, isn't it, and so I hope that it will teach people how to pray in line with Biblical principles and priorities as well," Geer said.

One challenge for Geer and his team is keeping the app working properly. Both Apple and Google release new versions of their operating systems every year, necessitating updates to the app to remain compatible. This is one of the advantages for Christian organisations of using Geer's app rather than trying to create their own and keep it current each year. Another advantage is that the same audience can engage with multiple entities

within the same app instead of having to learn about and install a new app for each one.

Feeds can be set to publish on specific calendar days, repeat on a schedule, or in a blog format that remains active until replaced by the next issue, and users separately can schedule how often they want to receive each subscribed feed. Under the calendar form, each day's item can only be viewed on the day it is scheduled; Geer said the ability to scroll through previous days (likely the previous week) may return in an update later this year.

For now, we are using the calendar format, duplicating our *Pray Today* content, but we are also exploring additional feeds to request prayers in special circumstances or emergencies like the recent KwaZulu-Natal flooding.

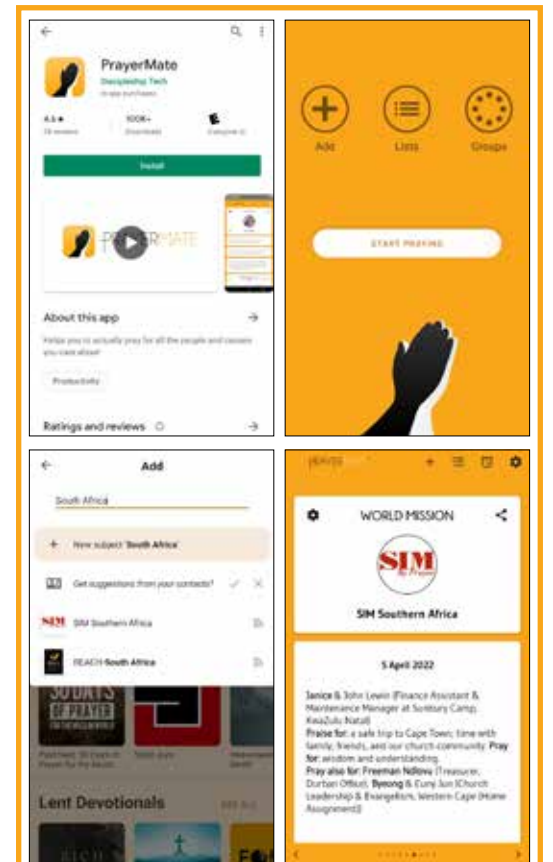
"I think one of the things that is so fantastic about having organisations like SIM involved is those feeds and things really kind of help stretch our prayer horizons, that we're not just praying for our own limited world, but it encourages me to look beyond that and pray more broadly for what God is doing in the world," Geer said.

Geer said they hear "almost every day" from people who say the app is helping them form better prayer habits and grow in their love of Jesus.

"It always really encourages me when people get in touch and say how the app has helped them, and the thing that I love is the massive breadth of people who enjoy *PrayerMate* and find it helpful. We've got pastors who would be praying anyway, but for them, *PrayerMate* just helps them manage the kind of complexity of their prayer lists, and that's fantastic, but we also, at the other end of the spectrum, we have people who are kind of brand new baby believers taking their very first steps in prayer, and I love it when people leave a review saying something like, 'I didn't have a clue how to even get started in prayer and *PrayerMate* has helped me to have some kind of structure,'" he said.

Geer loves that the Lord has positioned him to use his IT knowledge and skills to participate in ministry and that *PrayerMate* helps other believers to grow in their faith and prayerfulness.

"It's a real privilege getting to do it, and you know, I'm very aware of that, and it's such a blessing to see how God has used it over the years and grown it; eleven years ago, when I started it, I couldn't really have imagined where it's ended up, and the doors that it's opened for me to pursue other projects and things as well."



How to install *PrayerMate* and subscribe to our feed:

1. Go to your app store and search for "PrayerMate," or use the links below:
 - Android—<https://bit.ly/38tdqRW>
 - Apple—<https://apple.co/3vQcbo7>
2. Tap "Install" for Android or "Get" for Apple
3. Tap "Get Started"
4. Tap "Add"
5. Use the search bar to search for "South Africa"
6. Select "SIM Southern Africa" from the list
7. Tap on "Subscribe to Feed" at top right
8. Tap on a category where you want SIM SA's prayer feed (we recommend "World Missions")
9. You are now subscribed to our feed
10. Tap on our feed to open it; read and pray daily

You can also subscribe by visiting <http://praynow4.org/simsouthernafrica/> or by scanning this QR code with your mobile device.



Pray



...in every situation

*“Is anyone among you in trouble? Let them pray.
Is anyone happy? Let them sing songs of praise.”
— James 5:13 (NIV)*

SIM relies on the faithful prayers of believers throughout South Africa and around the world to continue the ministries entrusted to us by the Lord. By praying with us in praise and celebration and in need and intercession, our prayer partners participate in a real and essential way in the Lord’s work.

We invite you to pray for each person and ministry featured in this issue and for Christ’s church and kingdom in general.

Please consider joining or forming a local prayer group, and sign up for our monthly prayer letter, *Pray Today*, by emailing sim.sa@sim.org or by subscribing to “SIM Southern Africa” in the *PrayerMate* app (available for Android and Apple devices).

As always, thank you very much for your prayers.

Stock image by Jack Sharp on Unsplash.com

Continuing 129 years of ministry in SIM's first location, Nigeria

By Nicoline Zwikker, SIM South Africa Missionary



Nigeria is the most populous country in Africa, with over 200 million people, all in need of God's amazing grace.

It's here that SIM had its beginnings with the founding fathers landing on African soil in 1893, looking to penetrate the interior of the continent with God's life-giving word.

Today, it is a country in some turmoil. The south still holds primarily to Christian belief, while the north is almost fully Muslim, with many northern states under Sharia law. These differences cause the middle belt of the country to experience tension between the two, and many internally displaced people (IDPs) result from the unrest that breaks out. There are still areas where Boko Haram is active, and religious and economic kidnappings are a common reality. Yet, God's presence is strong and visible.

Working within this setting, SIM provides various ministries, including a Faithful Witness outreach team in the core north. Faithful Witness is a SIM initiative seeking to build and send teams together to do church planting where the name of Christ is least known.

As in many other countries, SIM in Nigeria also partners with other organisations to meet needs. Living in Jos, the capital of Plateau state in central

Nigeria, I have been involved for the past year with City Ministries, which is led by EMS, the missionary arm of ECWA (Evangelical Church Winning All).

City Ministries follows Christ's example of demonstrating love for people through ministry focused on both proclaiming the word and providing compassionate care, and Nigeria has much need for both. City Ministries had its beginnings 25 years ago helping street children but now has three main focuses for ministry.

The first focus is urban outreach from our Gidan Bege centre (Hausa for "House of Hope"). Here, we reach vulnerable and marginalised groups in and around Jos with the love of Jesus. Every Tuesday, street children are still reached with a weekly programme where they are fed, washed, medically examined and taught from the Word of God. There is also a team that visits brothels, prisons, detention centres and hospitals, as well as gives help to the disabled and displaced. Gidan Bege also runs two additional centres—the first assists widows through a tailoring business, and the second is a care centre for women needing shelter or post-recovery care from addiction.

The second ministry focus is Kings Kids, which has eight centres in Jos and surrounding states that house approximately 350 children. These



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Previous pages: SIM partners with ECWA's City Ministries in many programmes, including a tailoring business in Jos that provides paid training, Bible studies, and other help to widows.

Above: City Ministries feeds street children a healthy meal every Tuesday through its Gidan Bege (Hausa for "House of Hope") centres. The ECWA ministry began 25 years ago by helping street children but now provides other services, too.

Facing page: The widows encounter the beauty of Christ as they express their own artistry by making bags, clothing and other goods.

Below: Widows earn money, gain skills and learn about Jesus.



Photo by Brian Heffron



Photo by Brian Heffron



Photo by Brian Heffron

Left: A poster at the Jos ECWA offices celebrates their history, including the central role of SIM and its three founders (Walter Gowans, Thomas Kent, and Rowland Bingham, left to right). SIM and ECWA grew together out of their original efforts.

Below: Gidan Bege's youth centres offer children many activities and opportunities.

Facing, top: Looking eastward over Jos from the hilltop of Jarding Reading Garden.

Facing, bottom: Cow vaccinations provide important help and a means of outreach to rural Fulani herdsman and their families in the north.



Photo by Brian Heffron

homes have local Nigerian house parents and centre leaders caring for the needs of the children. Due to concerns over the standard of education and desiring to have a Christian ethos in the schools, Kings Kids started three schools attached to our larger centres, offering both academic and vocational streams. Because more children are coming through the centres, Kings Kids added a life experience home to help those who have graduated secondary school to learn a skill before they are thrust out into the world of independence.

The third ministry focus is a rural outreach programme to the North using cow vaccinations to reach the Fulani herdsman and their families. We praise God for testimonies of Muslims coming to know Christ through this means.

It's hard for me to share briefly what most strikes

me about my new place of ministry. What I see is a country that is struggling to run effective services for its people, where the church has had to play a much bigger role to help. Literacy and schooling are far poorer than in South Africa. However, the heart of people puts me to shame. Like the widow's mite, people will give of the very little they have to help one another, without complaint.

I have been blessed to be part of multiple aspects of the work, from participating in outreach and discipleship (with the teenage girls under Kings Kids and with the women and children in the Jenta township) to overseeing finances and building projects, as well as assisting with business classes and self-sustaining projects to help reduce the dependence on overseas support. The business classes complement the

skills training that the young people and widows are receiving.

Esther's story is typical of those that I've heard during this year. Esther was given away as a baby because her mother had lost multiple babies and was afraid that Esther would also die. The lady who took her in saw to her primary schooling, but then expected Esther to work for her keep, so at age 13, she was on the streets trying to sell a few wares. At 14, she was married, having met a boy and hoping that he would be a way out of her predicament.

In God's grace, a neighbour took an interest in Esther and brought her to church. It was here that she first learnt that she was not abandoned but had a loving heavenly father. Now in her mid-forties, Esther has been coming faithfully to

our Jenta woman's fellowship. She loves coming because here she can ask her questions and discuss the Bible truths, which is not practised in many churches. City Ministries helped her set up a small eatery that now supports her family.

If you hear Esther pray, you know that she and God have walked a long road together.

I thank God "that he who calls us is faithful, and he will do it" (1 Thessalonians 5:24) and that we can rely on his strength. I thank God also that the local church is leading much of this ministry, but due to the scope, there is still much to be done. If God is calling you to step out in faith, there are opportunities for both short- and long-term service, anywhere from a few weeks to years. May we continue to be faithful in our witness until the whole earth is full of His glory.



Submitted photo



Submitted photo

Opportunities every day

By Doug Porter, SIM South Africa Missionary

Every morning when I wake up, my desire is to worship God through my thoughts, my words and my deeds.

I am created to worship God in every moment.

There are mornings when it would be easy to neglect that (especially chilly mornings under warm covers when I didn't quite get to bed when I should have the night before). There are days when I could so very easily stumble into the day and go through the motions of everyday life because this day's schedule does not look much different than yesterday and the day before. There are times when—in the lulled routine of long-haul ministry and work, unless we are intentional—we don't take the moments to consider the fact that our lives are designed to be a vessel of praise toward the Maker of all good things. How that looks is different for each of us, and it may even look thirty different ways throughout the course of a single day—a day that is still a glorious opportunity to reflect back to Him that which He created you to be and do.

When today is hard, I will praise him still.

Ah, yes. Sounds great and works like a motivational video—for a moment. However, some days frankly don't look that way. There are even seasons in life during which I question each day why I am doing what I'm doing—because I certainly don't feel like I'm having any impact on this world for His glory. One day leads into another, then leads to another and soon the question becomes louder, "What's the point? Why am I here?" The questions are followed by silence or other chatter, which creates extra busyness. There just isn't time in the moment to answer those questions, so they stir in my heart and soul while life continues to travel faster and faster and get filled with things that don't seem to be terribly important for the presentation of the Gospel and the worship of Him who has called me here.

Then comes in a flash that moment when perhaps we have been numbed into a daily rhythm and forget our real purpose. We realize we have missed some opportunity to bring glory to God through the words and actions of everyday influence—but that each new moment is a new opportunity.

Education is not and has never been an easy field of calling, but it is an amazing field of influence and opportunities.

Jesus, who was often referred to as teacher or rabbi, demonstrates this. Scripture doesn't speak much of Jesus' profession as a carpenter other than that he was one before he entered his life in ministry. It does, however, acutely focus on his time as a teacher of the Word. He was in constant conversation with His Father in Heaven. Because He is the Word of God personified, Scripture and the presence of God Almighty was always on His mind and expressed with His words, sharing the lessons His students needed.

As a coach and an educator, I have the opportunity to influence the lives of nearly 60 boys directly on an almost daily basis. With a limited training schedule and the time constraints of a school day, we don't always have the opportunity to communicate about the deep intricacies of Scripture. However, I do have the opportunity to live my life as an ambassador for Christ, whether I am teaching a lesson in character development or working on an AstroTurf leading the boys through a physical workout so that they can be prepared for a professional life in the beautiful game.

The goal of Ubuntu Football Academy is to mentor and educate the next generation of leaders. We have the opportunity to pour into these young men (primarily ages 13-18 or grades 7-12), who hope to become professional football players.

The communities and families from which these boys come are difficult. According to a study by the Human Sciences Research Council and the South African Race Relations Institute, 60 percent of children in South Africa are growing up without the presence of a father in the home. This statistic does not account for those who are growing up in an unhealthy home where substances and violence are daily commonplace. Most of the boys in the academy come from difficult backgrounds; for many, trauma is the norm, and fathers are often absent or abusive and addicted to substances. Even those children with healthy family backgrounds face other challenges.

Every young person must find inspiration



Submitted photo

and motivation somewhere; when the cycle of absentee men in the lives of younger men happens, boys will often grab hold of those same traits unless there is a greater influence of authority to guide the way. To build leaders for the next generation, we are working with young men who are motivated to become professional footballers, and many of them have a legitimate chance to play professionally.

With the right help, guidance and opportunities, these boys are able to become amazing role models in their communities, where the gangs, violence, crime and drugs tend to draw boys away from productive pursuits. We teach leadership skills with a directed focus on Jesus. These young men then have a platform and voice within their homes. As a result, community transformation begins, and the focus shifts from things of this world to Jesus. The Gospel of Jesus is the influence to break the stronghold of challenging circumstances and bitterness toward the void where a father figure has not been.

By being a consistent presence in these boys' lives, we get the opportunity to heal the broken, destroy the bonds of past hurts and show that

Above: SIM missionary Doug Porter coaches the young men of Ubuntu Football Academy.

there is an alternative to the bruised and battered life in which they grew up.

Long-haul ministry can be a slow process with many days in which incremental success can be hard to see in the moment, and that can be a discouragement at times.

When we serve our Lord, our memory is often marked by the highlight reel of events and not by the little things. Much of life and ministry, however, is made up of all those little things. Those out-take moments are still watched carefully by those with whom you are so closely working.

For example, where we do our football training, we often have windy conditions that can be challenging when you are attempting to get things accomplished, and the balls simply blow across the field picking up pace as they go. Collecting balls and cones that fly out of place to allow a session to go smoothly and seamlessly is not glamorous nor does it seem like much. However, it does provide another opportunity to represent the role of a servant. Some won't see it, but others will fully and wholeheartedly recognize that they are getting

more from their session because they do not need to remove their focus from their task at hand.

The other day, I was reminded of 2 Thessalonians 3:3, where Paul writes, “The Lord is faithful. He will establish you and will guard you against the evil one” (ESV). How do we allow this biblical truth to be fleshed out? When the environment that is so prevalent and commonplace for so many of our boys is absentee fathers, drugs and gang violence, there has got to be a clear alternative to a better, more abundant, fruitful and influential life.

We provide opportunities for those around us to recognize the Lord’s faithfulness to them by our being present in these boys’ lives. If our hope is that boys who lack examples of faithful men in their lives will become drawn to being a man after God’s own heart, then he must see God’s heart being lived out in front of him. When you share the Gospel with someone in spoken words, they know why you do what you do. When you live life daily in front of the eyes of these young men, they truly get to see the Gospel lived out.

Sometimes that means being the guiding voice in recovery when they are injured and frustrated that their healing is not happening in the timetable

they wish. Sometimes it means that we get to share about the character of God through lessons in a classroom. Sometimes it means answering the late evening text from a young man who is afraid that he will not be able to fulfil his dreams of becoming a professional due to his physical stature and his fear that he will never have his growth spurt. Sometimes it means chasing down those rogue soccer balls that travel to the far end of the field so that their training session can run smoothly, and sometimes it even means simply standing at the back of a goal so that they can perform to the best of their abilities without fear that the goal will fall upon them.

Always, always, always, it means looking out for them, guarding and protecting them, and living in front of them as godly examples.

If we are to live out our calling, we must not expect our ministry to be a highlight reel—especially when we work in the field of education and training. We may no longer be with a student or athlete with whom we’ve tried to share the heart and soul of Jesus when the light turns on and they experience the understanding of the Gospel.

In this life, we may never know which of our words and actions will leave an indelible mark on a person—instead, we must live out the knowledge and grace of God, knowing full well that He is faithful. We must live out the faith that the Lord will establish, build a foundation and strengthen them.

These boys must know that they are safe because the Lord will guard and protect them against the evil one. If our standing at the back of a goal will show them that the Lord is faithful to protect them from a relentlessly buffeting wind, then that is what we do. We do this not for glamour or a spotlight but for the glory of God in even the mundane and uncelebrated roles of ministry.

I am created to worship God in every moment.

Someone is probably watching and when they do I want to be reflecting Jesus so that they may see Him and be drawn to Him.

To learn more about Ubuntu Football Academy, visit <https://www.ubuntufootball.com/>



Doug and Ellen Porter and family

Submitted photo



Give

Stock image from pxhere.com

...and help others receive God’s love

SIM Southern Africa and its ministries depend on the faithful support of believers partnering with us financially. Your contributions help equip sports and youth programmes, medical help, community outreach, food programmes, church planting, evangelism, and many other demonstrations of Christ’s love for people throughout South Africa and around the world.

If you are able to support this work financially, then gifts can be given online at [SIM.org.za/donate/](https://sim.org.za/donate/) or through the following bank details:

SIM Southern Africa
Standard Bank, Blue Route
Branch Code: 025609
Account Number: 072877014

Please Reference: Your name and “Partnership” and send a proof of payment to za.finance@sim.org or fax +27 (0) 21-715-3220.

When “The Bread of Life” also fills breadbaskets

Inundo Development combines the gospel with gardening

By Kerry Wiens, SIM South Africa Missionary



One of the trainees at Inundo celebrates her harvest.

Photo by Kerry Wiens



Stock image from pxture.com

Feeling Hungry, The “40 Hour Famine”

It was Canada cold: air burning my face, nose numb, ears tingly, and toes curled up into the arches of my feet, I was trying to find some warm pocket of air in the sleeping bag.

Youth retreats were not my thing. Being away from home, I was completely outside of my comfort zone. Yet there I was, a young teen somewhere in rural Canada during a weekend called the “40 Hour Famine.” As young people in solidarity with the hungering world, we had chosen to fast for 40 hours to experience hunger and let it move us to action. Each of us had secured sponsors that would contribute money to World Vision upon our successful completion. We ate supper on Friday night but would not eat again until lunch on Sunday.

It was Saturday night when I was going to bed hungry for the first time in my life. I had grown up in Zimbabwe and had lived through the war for political freedom, but I was part of a privileged minority in the country and had never experienced hunger. Instead, it would be in North America, my new home, that I would feel the pang of hunger for the first time.

I tried to fall asleep to no avail. I tossed and turned, but the gnaw in my stomach grew. It is a pain I still find difficult to describe. My stomach was silently screaming for food. The stabs and the tears that nagged at me were unwilling to find respite. The light sleep that eventually came did nothing to dull the discomfort.

Now, almost 35 years later, the experience of the “40 Hour Famine” is still with me. I encountered just one weekend of discomfort as a teenager, yet the memory of the pain and unpleasantness have lasted. In my limited youthful experience, the feeling of being hungry was terrible. Even in our lean years after immigrating to Canada, our home always had enough food, and my body was always nourished with a balanced, healthy diet. So, when I endured an aching stomach for the first time, the discomfort triggered some unwelcome feelings. Years later, I still find myself impacted by the experience of the “40 Hour Famine.” It has led to me wanting to engage in conversations and open myself to learning more about food and food issues in Africa.

A Hunger That Swallows Our Land, Lamenting Together

When we begin to reflect upon hunger, I draw upon the words of provocative Nigerian poet Obinna Chilekezi, who—filled with his own descriptions and impressions—started writing poems at an early age.

Chilekezi personalizes hunger. “Hunger befriends the land / The land befriends hunger,” he writes in “Food comes first”. In “Not just this change”, he writes, “Hunger has swallowed our land whole” (<https://www.africaresearch.org/food-first-and-other-poems/>). I find it compelling how Chilekezi uses an experience like hunger, which involves want and emptiness, to personify a glutton with a ravishing appetite. I also find his metaphor rather unsettling.

The Second Coming of Change by Obinna Chilekezi

*The dawn has
stayed long to break.*

*Promised daylight
nowhere to be found.*

*A pinch of salt, a drop of tea, we wait; a little
mercy,
long nights of hunger blinding its blinding
insanity of hope lost.*

*We want change, we want hope, we want a
new beginning
And the mercy of change.*



Photo by Kerry Wiens

So many of Chilekezi’s poems are blinding, heart-crying laments for Nigeria and for the African continent. How often do we lament for our country, for the state of food and provision for the poorest and most vulnerable? Do we want change? Are we willing to work for a new beginning?

Hunger Is Not Just About Empty Stomachs

Last year, the Daily Maverick media group in South Africa published a series of articles on hunger before World Hunger Day in May. They stated, “There is one universally accepted and universally understood measure of extreme poverty, and that is hunger. If you crave food but have no means of getting it (involuntary hunger) you are living in extreme poverty... As many as 10 million adults and nearly three million children experienced hunger in the past week in South Africa in 2021, and 2.5 million adults and 600,000 children were experiencing perpetual hunger, hunger every day or almost every day...” (Nick Spaul and Mark Tomlinson, Daily Maverick).

Did you catch that? Since May 2021, nearly ten million adults and three million children have been experiencing hunger every week in South Africa, and a quarter of those experience hunger at a deep, perpetual level that is considered extreme

Facing page: “Canada cold” often takes one’s breath away.

Above: Planting maize at Inundo.

poverty. With the impact of COVID deepening, and food prices rising rapidly, those figures are likely to be even higher. That means that over 20 percent of South Africa’s population struggles with lack of access to food. World Vision states that, “Global hunger creates a cycle that people can’t escape from. It causes individuals to be less productive and more prone to disease, which in turn makes them less able to improve their livelihoods or earn a better income.”

Hunger is not just about empty stomachs. Long-term hunger results in poor physical and mental development. Children facing starvation are much more susceptible to disease and illnesses. Hunger drives mass movements of people. Because of hunger, the vulnerable are driven into dangerous situations. Hunger drives conflict.

Hunger Prevents Development

In South Africa, therefore, 20 percent of our population is caught up in a cycle that is difficult to escape from, and the lack of food impacts every aspect of their lives. Children in those situations are more vulnerable to trafficking and abuse.

Furthermore, hunger acts as a handicap that prevents development, or at least makes change very difficult, while acting as an impetus for conflict, danger, dislocation and displacement.

It is important to consider just how foundational food is in a society. People will act in desperation when their stomachs ache for nutrition. We've heard numerous stories of people eating mud from a riverbed just to try to fill the ache in their stomachs. Well-meaning ministers of the gospel have—for generations—brought the “bread of life” to communities without considering that God might also be calling them to bring good news for community breadbaskets that could provide an abundance of locally produced food using local resources.

Gardening: From Hobby to Vocation

Dan and I lived in Alberta, Canada for 13 years when we were first married. As a hobby and a way to enjoy the short summers outdoors, we both became gardeners. We struggled with the late advent of summer warmth and the early frosts, but somehow in only two months every year, we were able to grow a wide array of produce for our table. In 2009, we began to feel God shifting our gaze from vocational church ministry to cross-cultural ministry in South Africa. One of the first things we packed were our gardening books, because we were very excited about being able to grow vegetables year-round in KwaZulu-Natal.

We arrived in Amanzimtoti in January 2010. Our initial assignment was to provide management and administrative support to a thriving community development organization called Seed of Hope. HIV and AIDS was a huge scourge in the community of Bhekulwandle at the time, so we mobilized whatever we could to serve and encourage families fighting the virus. One of the most concerning factors in people's ability to keep their immune systems strong was the level of nutrition in their diet. We saw people wasting away because they were eating only mielie meal.

A Resource Called Farming God's Way

Armed with a resource that was new to us, Dan staked out and cleared his first Farming God's Way Garden in Bhekulwandle in May 2010. We hoped that, if we could teach families to grow food, then maybe they could care for their sick family members with more nutritional food options.

Farming God's Way was relatively new in South Africa, but trainers were already teaching people to grow food using locally available resources and without the need for costly inputs or machinery. An amazing claim was that small scale farmers using Farming God's Way methods could actually get better results and higher profitability than conventional large-scale farmers. It would, however, require significant shifts in world-view and methodology.

From those small beginnings, Dan worked hard to get his trainer accreditation, and we began to get requests from other organizations to help them train people to grow food. After about four years, Dan transitioned to training Farming God's Way full-time. In 2017, we moved into regional Farming God's Way ministry, serving much of KwaZulu-Natal, and even extending to Tanzania and Ethiopia. Most of our ministry was itinerant, involving travel to different communities, and we experienced the ups and downs of some very passionate follow-through, as well as some huge let-downs.

Inundo: A Place to Demonstrate God's Provision and Overflow

We began to dream about demonstrating God's provision from the land on a small footprint somewhere in the Durban area. Dan explains, “If people could just see what is possible, it would inspire them to keep investing in their land even when the going gets tough.”

In 2019, a dream called Inundo was birthed. *Inundo* is a Latin word meaning “overflow.” Our vision was for Africa to steward its abundance and thereby unleash a tidal wave of overflow, within and from the continent. We wanted to start with the assumption of abundance in Africa and dream of the day when overflow from Africa pours into the rest of the world.

God provided the seed money for a small holding in Outer West Durban to be purchased by the Inundo Development Trust, and in September 2019, we moved to the property. Most of the land was a blank slate of unimproved soil.

Slowly, as we have been able, we have cleared land, planted seeds, covered all our cultivated soil with rich organic mulch, and made compost with ingredients collected on the property or in our neighbourhood. We have installed a rainwater collection system, experimented with soil conditioning cover crops, and have grown



Photo by Kerry Wiens

Above: SIM missionaries Dan & Kerry Wiens.

Below: A training group in Tanzania.



Photo by Kerry Wiens



Photo by Brian Heffron



Photo by Brian Heffron

maize, green beans and lots of vegetables. We have also built a training tent and trained hundreds of people. When we first started, the “soil” was as hard as rock; it was like digging into granite. Through tests, we discovered the soil was highly acidic and contained a large percentage of sticky, immovable clay.

The restoration that we have seen in the soil over the last two years has been truly miraculous. The brash, orange, pebble-like structure is turning darker, softer, and more like chocolate. Life is returning as earthworms, insects and fungi fulfil their incredible roles in the ecosystem.

Opening the Floodgates

The changes we see are beacons of hope. When people care for the land, God enables it to overflow with fertility again. Land that is not in use can be repurposed, and even small allotments can produce a surprising harvest. The most vulnerable can experience a new resilience. Contrasting to Obinna Chilekezi’s lament of the late dawn and lost promises, we are seeing a new dawn through Farming God’s Way. In the cry for the “mercy of change,” God’s incredible mercy is restoring the soil of the Inundo model farm, even as we teach others the principles that reconcile their lives to him. It’s no longer just

Facing page: *With time, care and coaching, the students see God’s blessing in their gardens and lives.*

Above: *Discussing soil improvement and plant spacing at Inundo.*

a pinch of salt and a drop of tea but a floodgate of heaven opened for the poorest of the poor.

Our “bread of life” is calling us to care about the breadbaskets in our communities. Hunger is far too prevalent in South Africa and has far-reaching effects on the health of our society. Maybe we each need our own “40 Hour Famine” to feel and remind ourselves of the gaping ache of hunger. How do we reflect the aroma of our Lord to those whose stomachs are perpetually empty? How do we reform our food systems so that the inequalities are levelled out and food sovereignty is ensured?

We believe that concerted, intentional effort is needed to transform our food systems. It is a sacred and urgent call. Overflow is possible; the resources are already available to bring transformation. We pray that SIM will lead the charge in training leaders to address these foundational societal issues. Inundo is here to teach, train and resource—let us know how we can help.

Those interested in more information about Farming God’s Way and Inundo Development can visit <https://inundo.org>.

Why I wrote *Images of Leadership: Biblical Portraits of Godly Leaders*

By Dave Bremner, SIM South Africa Missionary

As a young missionary in rural Paraguay, grappling with the cultural turmoil I was thrust into as an English-speaking South African, living in a rural community that spoke both Spanish and Guarani, I was quite perplexed by how I saw leaders behave.

Since there were not many evangelical church examples around us at that time, my experience of Paraguayan leadership was that of the local institutional, religious or government authorities. I wasn't too surprised to see worldly attitudes and domineering behaviour by those who held power. What did surprise me was when I began to seek out church leaders in the cities and discovered that many of the patterns of leadership in the evangelical church were very similar to what had caused me dismay among the community leaders. I dug into a study of how the Bible portrays leaders, focusing on the explicit commands to leaders in the New Testament. I categorized what I found into some recurrent themes and began digging into the way evangelical leaders responded to these Biblical instructions.

Many years later, when we were invited to head up the leader development ministry of SIM, those categories burst back onto the stage when the incoming International Director, Joshua Bogunjoko, asked us to frame our leader development on a set of categories. It felt like he was reading from my notes that I had written back in Paraguay!

We all have an idea deep in our minds of what a leader should do, how a leader should behave and what we expect leaders to be. Those ideas form unspoken images that we use to subconsciously evaluate leaders around us, and we live out those images in the way we go about leading.

I wrestled with the gap between my own image of what a leader should be and the images I saw in scripture. It became very clear that unless I modified my idea of the perfect leader to match the Biblical image of a leader, there would be no way I could please the Lord in the way I so desperately wanted to as a leader in SIM.

The Biblical images of godly leaders are not hard to find. They permeate scripture right from



Introduction to "Images of Leadership" - Dave Bremner
 20 views · Dec 29, 2021
 "I'd like to introduce you to this book that I wrote."

the first pages to the last. We are all familiar with the concept of a leader being a shepherd of God's flock. We have all marvelled at Jesus' teaching that leaders are not to lord it over others or exercise authority over others but are to be humble servants just like him. We know that God entrusts to us the stewardship of his kingdom on earth, expecting us to faithfully fulfil the responsibilities he has given to each of us. The problem is often that although we recognize these images of Biblical leadership, we allow them to be eclipsed by the cultural images we each have inherited of what a leader is supposed to look like.

We began the Leader Development ministry based on these images. At each launch of a cohort, we examined the Biblical passages that reveal the images and debated case studies of how a leader chose to act like and shepherd, a servant, and a steward in the context of the case study. It was a rich time of discovery and learning for all of us. We gathered confidence and experience with the concepts, and then one day someone asked for more comprehensive notes that they could take home to study further.

My first attempt at documenting the concepts became the first draft of this book that now has been published. The explanation of the images has been refined and improved by each cohort of leaders that examined them. The draft manuscript was lovingly and kindly edited and improved by a long list of godly colleagues and friends.

Since the book is about images, I really wanted it to be rich in images that communicate in stereo

with the prose. I wanted it to be pleasing to look at, attractive as well as informative. I want it to be a resource that helps to permeate the image we hold of leaders with Biblical profiles that reflect the way God sees leadership.

It is a new experience for me to have published a book! I am still amazed that it all worked out, resulting in this concise but profound book that attracts the eyes, hearts and minds of ordinary people who want to serve an extraordinary God in the way that pleases him.

Those readers who are interested in obtaining a copy of Images of Leadership: Biblical Portraits of Godly Leaders or those who want to know more can visit <http://www.imagesofleadership.com>. Find a vendor, connect directly with the author, and explore supporting materials as a series of videos including the one shown on the facing page. There is also a video message from SIM International Director Joshua Bogunjoko. The book is available in hard-cover and electronic formats.

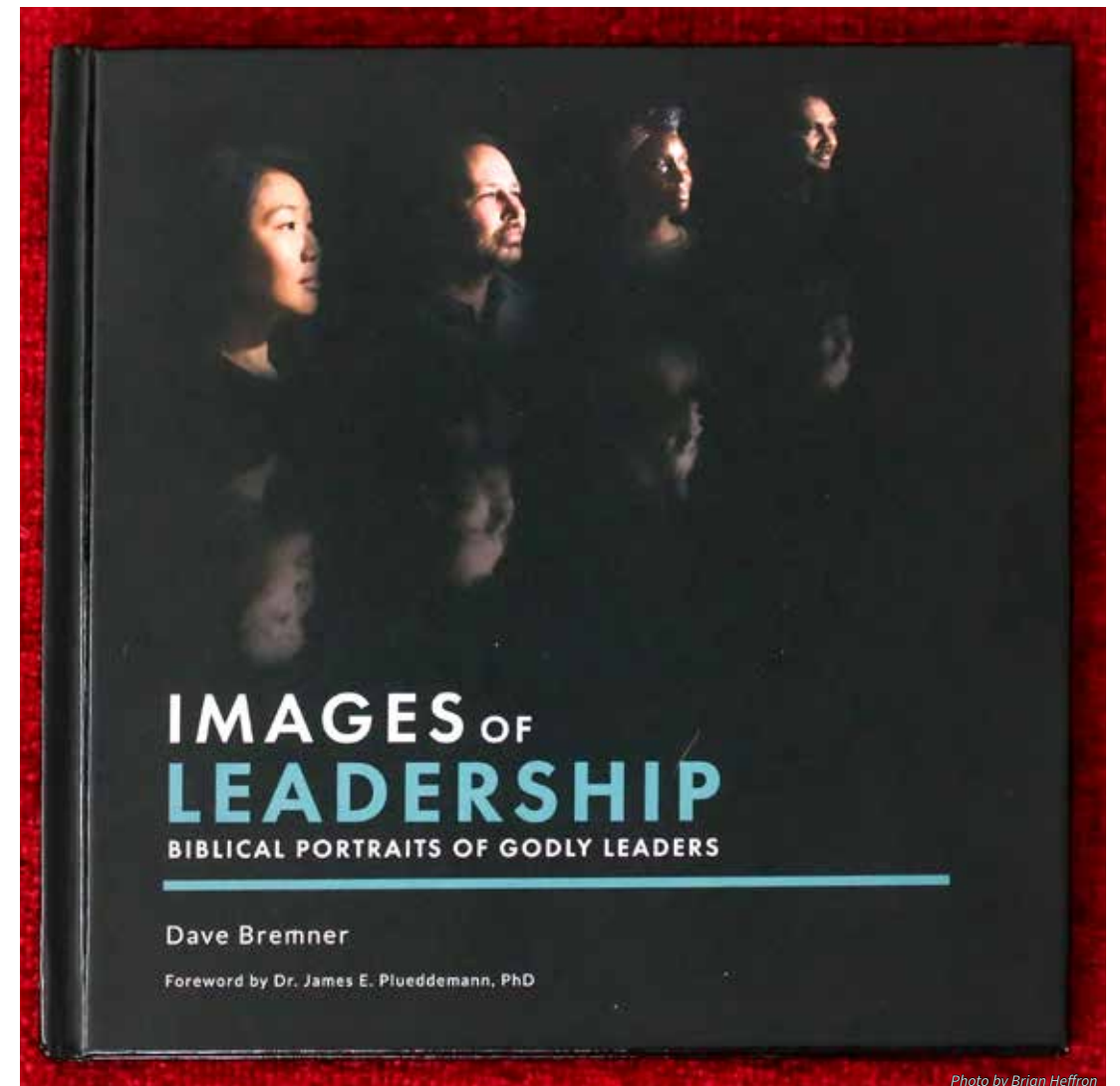


Photo by Brian Heffron

Beyond the River

By Brian Heffron, SIM South Africa Communications Manager

Few themes have seemed as prominent these past few years as brokenness and redemption, just as they have always been central to Christian beliefs.

These themes are also central to *Beyond the River*. The 2017 film follows Steve and Duma, two men from vastly different backgrounds in Johannesburg as they partner to compete in the Dusi Canoe Marathon, an annual three-day race from Pietermaritzburg to Durban on the Msunduzi and Mgeni rivers. The film is fictional but was inspired by the real-life partnership of Piers Cruickshanks and Siseko Ntondini, who won gold in the 2014 Dusi.

In the film, every character bears some brokenness. Steve and his wife, Annie, are broken within themselves and in their marriage, haunted by a past tragedy and struggling to communicate. Duma struggles with his impoverished environment, his family responsibilities and loss of his mother, his lack of financial options (other than reluctantly helping his friend Zama with petty crimes), and guilt over his choices, struggles and failings. Zama serves as the film's voice of despair, manipulating and mocking Duma, "You think you'll make it out of here? Let me tell you one thing: you're going to die here. We're all going to die here." Duma's canoeing mentor Oupa, whose wholeness, success and stability have seemed exemplary throughout the film, shares near the end some details of his own struggles. Duma's younger sister struggles with school, home life, and not having a mother. Their father struggles to provide for all of them and to accept Duma's focus on the race instead of helping earn money.

Inherent to brokenness is also the awareness of its injustice, that things should be better than they are: a desire for redemption. One either surrenders to hopelessness (or pursues only more of the same, as Zama does) or keeps fighting to break free and heal self and situation.

"I want to be a 'Somebody,'" Duma says. Oupa later tells him, "There's a saying, 'Once you've

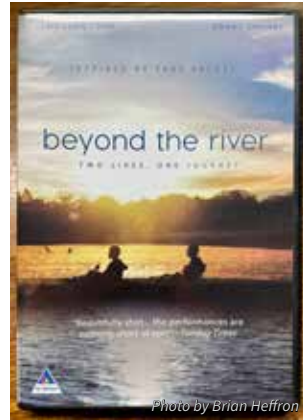


Photo by Brian Heffron

done the Dusi, you feel like you can do anything."

But how can they accomplish anything while traumatised, broken and alone? Each character is isolated in some way, broken from connection with others. "Two are better than one," the Bible reminds us, "because they have a good return for their labour: if either of them falls down, one can help the other up. But pity anyone who falls and has no one to help them up" (Ecclesiastes 4:9-10 NIV).

Even Steve and Duma's eventual partnership is broken for a long time. Steve entered it reluctantly, and he neither views nor treats Duma as an equal partner. Neither does Duma, who hesitates to share his own ideas about how they could perform better. When Duma does suggest changes, Steve rejects them and breaks the partnership—until Steve's friend and coach, Dan, steps in and challenges him to bridge his brokenness with Duma.

"Bru, these things take effort, man. You want to make a partnership like this work, you've got to get stuck in. Like, find out what this bloke's story is, understand him, find out what makes him tick," Dan says.

Ultimately, redemption begins to build as both Steve and Duma listen to their mentors and begin opening up to each other, speaking and listening as friends. This reflects both Genesis 2:18's "The LORD God said, 'It is not good for the man to be alone. I will make a helper suitable for him'" (NIV) and Proverbs 27:17's "As iron sharpens iron, so one person sharpens another" (NIV). Conflicts resolve and healing begins for each during a montage to the hymn, "Amazing Grace."

As Christians, we know that full healing and redemption are found only in Christ. Every person, though, is made in His image and thus bears a glimmer of His redemptive power through coming alongside others in loving friendship, compassion and wisdom. Though not an overtly Christian film, *Beyond the River* certainly bears faithful witness to the power of redemption.

Making Isigwaqane and friends

By Laura Everett, SIM South Africa Missionary

It was either going to be a disaster or an outright masterpiece.

We were at a traditional 21st birthday/coming-of-age celebration (*Umemulo* in isiZulu) on what felt to be the hottest day of the summer. It was considered to be both an honour and a test to be "placed at the pots" during a big celebration.

Before this day, I would normally set up shop at the chopping station, crying my eyes out whilst slicing hundreds of onions. I would be lying to say that I was thrilled to be stationed at the pot with one of the more complicated and strenuous dishes to cook. *Isigwaqane* is delicious, but the extensive process of mixing maize meal, beans and other thickening ingredients in a massive pot requires the strength of an ox. I am, in fact, not an ox. My arm strength is more comparable to ... well ... that of any other average young adult female.

Luckily, I wasn't alone in this culinary endeavour, as the matriarch of the family was the one doing the true cooking. She stood faithfully by my side, adding one ingredient after another (steadily adding to the thickness and stirring difficulty of the dish). I marvelled at her intrinsic ability to know the exact amount of butter, spices, and maize meal to add, while I struggle to balance ingredients for hosting a mere five people. Her patience with and trust in me was commendable, especially as I felt the real struggle was trying not to drip sweat into the pot. At least I wasn't the only woman facing that particular battle.

After hours of over-stirring and over-heating, the dishes were complete. To the matriarch and all of us in the kitchen, the real celebration was in the satisfaction of the guests. I've never tasted such an amazing *Isigwaqane* as I did on that day. It tasted strangely of satisfaction and relationship. To this day, I can't repeat the same recipe, because, without the environment and the people, it just doesn't taste the same.

"Food is memories," poignantly remarks the French sous-chef, Marguerite, in the culinary drama, *The Hundred-Foot Journey*. I've also found that statement to be true. Learning to cook traditional food

in Zulu communities has both helped me build relationships and taught me the language.

Upon arriving, I sought out a private isiZulu instructor who soon became a dear friend. On one occasion, she came over and we cooked a chicken curry dish, while she patiently endured my parroting of literally every isiZulu cooking word that came out of her mouth. This and other meetings over a meal or coffee built our friendship. On another occasion, when visiting the family of another friend, her mom taught me to make *Amadombolo* (large dumplings cooked in a broth). I remember making a mental note of the ingredients and amounts as the recipe was written solely in her mind.

Many other instances of sharing recipes and meals have coloured and shaped my relationships with people here in South Africa. I could write them all down here, but I would prefer to chat with you as we prepare a meal together. After all, it is there that memories are made.

Recipe for *Isigwaqane*:

- Many of cups of maize meal
- A pot of beans
- 3 (or 10?) blocks of butter
- Handfuls of spices
- 50 beef stock cubes, or something like that
- Whatever amount of water your heart tells you to add...

...You know what, I think you had better come learn from one of my friends.



Submitted photo

What's in your hand?

By John Berry, SIM South Africa Missionary

Recently I went through a time of unexpected financial challenge.

I had been relying on my regular monthly mission support, but I was suddenly faced with financial expenses that were beyond my budget. My car had broken down, unexpected medical expenses had arisen, and the usual monthly bills still needed to be paid. I did not know what to do except pray about the situation.

The Lord reminded me of a message I had recently heard. Jesus had been teaching people in a remote place, but the disciples wanted Him to send them away to the surrounding villages to buy something to eat.

Jesus gave them the unexpected reply, "You give them something to eat" (Mark 6:37). To the disciples, though, this seemed an impossible situation—there were 5 000 men present (excluding women and children), and feeding them all would cost more than half a year's wages. Jesus asked the disciples how many loaves of bread they had. "Five loaves and two fish," they answered. Jesus then directed them to have the people sit down in groups of hundreds and fifties; taking the five loaves and two fish, he gave thanks and gave them to his disciples to distribute. Miraculously, all the people ate, and afterwards, the disciples even picked up twelve basketfuls of broken bread and fish.

A similar miracle took place when Jesus fed the four thousand from seven loaves and a few small fish (Mark 8:1-10). The point of these miracles was to teach the disciples that Jesus was all-powerful and could provide food miraculously to feed the people but that He wanted to use the disciples and their resources in the process.

This same principle is repeated elsewhere in the Bible. In 2 Kings 4:1-7, we read of the widow of the prophet whose husband had died and his creditors were coming to take her boys as slaves. Elisha asked the widow what she had in her house, to which she replied, "Nothing, except a small jar of olive oil". Elisha directed her to ask her neighbours for empty



Photo by John Berry

jars and then to go inside her house and pour oil into each jar and set it aside. The oil continued to flow until all the jars were filled and then stopped. Elisha directed her to sell the oil to pay her debts. God did the miracle of increasing the supply of oil but used the widow's small jar of oil and her efforts in the process.

When I thought of these examples of God's provision, I asked myself, "What do I have in my hand, what resources do I have, and how can I use them to meet these unexpected financial needs?"

I had recently moved from my home in Tokai to a cottage in Kommetjie, but for the past few years, I had been selling frozen berries (blueberries, raspberries and strawberries) to customers in Tokai to supplement my income. Living now in a new community, I reasoned it would take some time to set up a new customer base, but I still decided to use my resources and advertised in the local Kommetjie marketplace and our street community group.

The response was overwhelming, and sales of frozen berries took off in leaps and bounds. This enabled me to settle my immediate debts and breathe again. A God miracle indeed! In reflection, I am reminded that our Lord is a generous, loving, caring Father Who wants to bless us and use us to bless His people. When we offer Him our resources, talents and time, He involves us in His miraculous provisions.

God's love, mercy, salvation & power

By Benjamin Pillay, SIM South Africa Director

It had just been made public that I would be leaving pastoral ministry after 23 years and joining SIM Southern Africa as a missionary. It was met with mixed reactions. Whilst most understood that I am driven by what God wants regardless, at least once I was asked, "Why? Why would you leave a paying job?"

Being in pastoral ministry never meant that finances were guaranteed or "adequate" but (as I learned over the years) to trust God for everything from our daily bread to the clothes on our back and a roof over our head. I can assure you that I have so many stories of God's miraculous provision.

Let me reflect on a few passages of scripture that explain the "WHY?"

God's love

"Compelled by God's great love." What more reason does any of us need than the love of God? He loved us first, giving us His only begotten son. To love Him in response to His great love for us is to love our neighbour as ourselves. There is a song titled "Reach One More for Jesus," part of the *Purpose Driven Life* repertoire, that aches with hope of bearing much more fruit by abiding in Christ and obeying His prompting to love one another, laying down our lives. Oh, to be loved by Him and to make His love known! (Consider 1 John 4:19-20, John 3:16, Matthew 22:36-40, and John 15:1-17)

God's mercy

In Exodus 18:16-33, we are exposed to the conversation between God and Abraham. Abraham's unrelenting query to the extent of God's mercy is revealed in his persistent questioning of what would satisfy God so that he would spare Sodom. For the sake of the righteous, God's mercy knows no end. Is it not then the responsibility of the righteous to reveal that mercy to all of us in need of God's loving mercy, just as Jonah came to realise? Oh, to have found such great mercy myself and to make His mercy known! (John 1-4)

God's salvation

"I am not ashamed of the gospel, because it is

the power of God for salvation to everyone who believes, first to the Jew, then to the Greek. For the gospel reveals the righteousness of God that comes by faith from start to finish, just as it is written: "The righteous will live by faith" (Romans 1:16-17). Whilst the world seeks for God in experiences, old wives' tales, myths and legends, we know the True and Living God. How great a treasure deposited into earthen vessels to be found in us by those who seek salvation. Oh, to know His salvation and to declare it to all the nations of the earth!

God's power

His presence in our lives resonates with power that necessitate a witness of Jesus. A witness that is unashamedly, wholly dependent on the Holy Spirit, who in the demonstration of His power causes the faith of people not to rest in the wisdom of men but in the power of God (Acts 1:8, 1 Corinthians 2:1-5). Oh, to have God's power at work in me and through me for the salvation of all who believe!

It is unconscionable to have God's love—having experienced His mercy and received His salvation and His powerful presence in anticipation of a witness—and not be engaged in mission with our missionary God. Therefore, I surrender. To some He gave the gift of being an apostle, prophet, pastor, teacher, or evangelist, but to all of us, He gave His love! That's why.



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GO



... follow God's call to share His love and truth

From teachers and evangelists to mechanics and medical workers, every believer has a role to play in God's work of meeting people's needs, showing them Christ's love, and making disciples from every tribe, tongue and nation!

Explore the many opportunities to serve the Lord in global missions in South Africa and around the world. Call +27 (0) 21-715-3200 or email za.sendingenquiries@sim.org to begin a conversation with us.

Photo by Brian Heffron

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