

SIM *now*

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From the Director's Desk

Christmas has come and gone, but the story of Christmas remains true for us all. In the Gospel according to Luke, we are told that an angel of the Lord appeared to unsuspecting shepherds declaring, "Fear not, for behold, I bring you good news of great joy that will be for all the people. For unto you is born this day in the city of David a Saviour, Who is Christ the Lord" (Luke 2:10-11). Luke gives us the most detailed story of the birth of our Lord Jesus Christ. He tells us of a wonderful confirmation of the news by a multitude of heavenly host together with the angels praising God saying: "Glory to God in the highest, and on earth peace among those with whom he is pleased!" (Luke 2:14).

Luke wants us to see that the story of Emmanuel, the "Word who became flesh and dwelt among us" (John 1:14) is a story of the world finally finding full joy in God. We are reminded of this every year during the Christmas time when the chorus of praise is sung: "Joy to the world, the Lord is come! Let earth receive her King; Let every heart prepare Him room" and we follow the example of Mary who "treasured up all these things and pondered them in her heart" (Luke 2:19).

But this is not what we see in the world today. 2016 has been a memorable year marked by all kinds of tension and sad news of great suffering. The refugees in Europe have taken central stage in the world, the changing political scene continues, and interesting decisions have been made. Here in South Africa, we had our share: #mustfall movements, the ongoing political uncertainties.

Other nations, too, are wrestling with their own political situations and decisions that are being made. It is easy to despair and give up hope.

Jesus brings joy, peace, and truth; He is the light and hope of the world. Christians in the world respond to the gloomy picture by faith in knowing that Jesus Christ is the Lord. We are called to be the light in the Lord. In this issue of *SIMNow*, you will see what God is doing through missionaries, staff, and our partners. Our mandate is to share the love of Christ with those who are living and dying without Christ. In Mark 16:15, it says: "And He said unto them, Go into all the world and preach the gospel."

The gospel brings hope and those who are His have nothing to fear, nothing to lose, and everything to gain. Everything already waiting for them in heaven with God.

Because of the hope brought by the gospel, we can rejoice. Paul's excitement regarding our future hope spills over into an exhortation to stand firm (Philippians 4:1), because we know that the God Whom we serve is the supreme governor of heaven and earth and all power belongs to Him.

I am deeply grateful and humbled by your commitment and support for SIM and our missionaries. We may be uncertain about 2017, but God did send His Son into this world to live a perfect life so that He might hand His holy accomplishments over to us as the greatest gift of all. In His death on the cross, we are forgiven and are made friends with God. We begin this year with great joy and hope in the knowledge of Christ Jesus coming into our world to reconcile us to God. May that hope bring you peace and gladness and give you great joy. ■

Siegfried Ngubane

Serving the strangers among us

by Brian Heffron, SIM SA journalist

Individuals and churches looking for ways to serve the strangers among them might consider helping them learn English.

"This is a great way that churches can reach the populations that are on our doorstep," said Sandy, an SIM SA missionary in Cape Town. "There are Somalis in many suburbs; there are Chinese all over the place; there are French-speakers in our parking lots—many of whom have qualifications, but they can't use them because they don't have English."



Sandy, originally from Johannesburg, has been with SIM SA for nearly 30 years. She has served in education, student outreach, and urban evangelism in South Africa and Ethiopia. Two years ago, she established a TESOL (Teaching English to Speakers of Other Languages) training programme at a local college in Cape Town.

"It's the only place that I know of in Africa that has TESOL as part of an undergraduate degree," she said.

The programme consists of four university-level modules totalling 56 credits and includes instruction, study, observation, and practice. It can be taken by full-time students as a two-year minor within their three-year degrees or by others as a stand-alone programme. Many of the students have completed the basic 120-hour module. Recent graduates taking a gap year, teachers wanting to refresh their skills and knowledge, and workers seeking new challenges as they approach retirement are among those Sandy believes could find TESOL rewarding.

"Language is a great way of building relationships," she said, "so it's a very valid way for people ministering and serving in communities where English is a really big need, and it can make a huge difference in people's lives."

As well as helping neighbours improve their lives, TESOL can also help pastors and missionaries get better training.

"You can't really get a theological education in Africa without English, so I see equipping people to teach English well as a very important skill for enabling Christian leaders to be trained," Sandy said. "It's not an end in itself, but without good English, it's really difficult for people to get a high level of leadership training."

Sandy said that about twelve students have completed the first two modules, and several of her students are already putting the lessons into practice. One is helping children at a school in Hout Bay, three more are preparing to go to South Korea next year, and a fifth is looking at teaching in another part of Asia.

"So although it's been going for a short while with only a few students completing the course, I'm already seeing students using it to serve," she said, adding that she hopes the programme will grow to have about fifteen students at each level.

Anyone interested in more information about entering or supporting the TESOL programme should contact SIM South Africa. ■

Other Ministries

Although Sandy's main role is coordinating the TESOL programme, she also ministers to the college's students through discipleship and Bible studies.

"I've been leading three little Bible studies this semester in Mark's gospel, and that's been fun. There have been a small number of students in my Bible studies, but some exciting conversations, and I've seen amazing growth in each of the students that have come into Bible study

"They often come from churches where they've had no Bible teaching at all. I had one student who at the beginning of the year said that she had never read a book of the Bible through. She's gone to church her whole life, she's a Sunday school teacher, but she's never read a whole book of the Bible. I've been doing one-on-one with Mark's gospel with her, and she's really got excited about understanding it for herself and got the kids in her Sunday school class to open the Bible and read it instead of just listening to stories.

"Another student at the beginning of the year said, 'I really didn't like reading the Bible,' and now, the student loves the Bible, is digging into it, and is running an apologetics course online."

Serving the church in North Africa

by Brian Heffron, SIM SA journalist

SIM's merger with another organisation earlier this year has brought in many new workers, including a South African woman helping the church in North Africa.

"There's so much happening there, which you'll never know unless you're there," said Maria.*

Maria has been serving in the area for several years, working to support the church there as an English language teacher and general helper. Although she is not allowed to share the gospel, Maria said there is no problem for her to be a Christian teaching Muslims how to speak English because that is a useful skill.

Maria said she discerned God calling her to the region just a few years after her conversion and began exploring opportunities in several countries. Even before her conversion, though, she had been setting down roots with SIM, doing design work with SIM South Africa's media staff.

Her work connects her with Christian leaders from several denominations, and she admires how the difficulties of recent years have helped them bridge old divisions. Many are involved in serving refugees and other foreigners.

Some aspects of the different churches remain unfamiliar, but she enjoys the fellowship. There are also times when she's amazed by more familiar elements. At one evangelical church she has attended, songs that originated in the West are adapted to local culture and believers.

"You have Hillsong praise and worship in Arabic, and as a foreigner, you're stood at the back, and you have earphones, and they translate it all into English, but to sit there and to see [a man following traditional local] dress code walking through those doors, and to your untrained eye, he looks like a Muslim rural old man, and there he is, worshipping Jesus – it's mind-blowing, truly mind-blowing," Maria said. "You don't see that on the news; you'll never see that on the news."

Serving God and His church there does include many difficulties and dangers, Maria said, but God has protected her through them. Pollution has contributed to

health problems like a large tumor, but doctors discovered it during a home assignment and were able to treat it successfully. The significant decrease of foreigners in recent years in her country of service has meant those who remain attract more attention, but Maria said her neighbours help protect her. She has had numerous close scrapes on the street, from cars narrowly missing her to a large object falling several stories and being stopped by its rope just over her head. Many local men are respectful to her, but others – especially young men in groups – are often physically aggressive toward women. A temporary change in her work assignment years ago disappointed her greatly, but she later realised it had kept her safely out of the city during the unrest that followed the Arab Spring.

"You know God's hand is around you," Maria said. "There's evidence of His angels surrounding you, and there's also evidence of prayer warriors." ■

**Name has been changed*



Prayer requests:

- for the country to have godly leadership
- for her students to find hope for their future
- for Christians to stand on God's promises in the Word
- for prayer supporters to fulfill their role faithfully and understand its importance



by Neil Parmenter, SIM SA projects coordinator

May we introduce you to a young man named Thembelani Maqajana?

Thembelani lives in the Khayelitsha district of Cape Town, is married with a 7-year-old son, and is a teaching elder at Makukhanye Baptist Church.

Thembelani is also someone who has benefitted through SIM SA's Church Leadership Training Fund. The fund provides partial scholarships to Bible college students studying to develop leadership skills for their continuing church ministries. Applicants must also have the support of their home church for their studies. Some are in full-time training to be pastors, while others are training to be better equipped for their ministries within their local church.

The programme has been helping students since 2004; this year, the fund awarded eleven scholarships totalling over R51,000 to a variety of people from both urban and rural churches. Awards are determined annually by representatives of SIM and its partner churches, Africa Evangelical Church and Evangelical Church of South Africa.

Across South Africa, there is a need for pastors and teachers to receive sound Biblical training, equipping them to teach and train others. We are excited to be working with churches and individuals around South Africa, supporting the training of the next generation of leaders so they are "thoroughly equipped for every good work" (2 Timothy 3:17).

Thembelani recently completed his Bachelor of Ministry studies at Cape Town Baptist Seminary. He offered this testimony about the way the Church Leadership Training Fund has helped him:

Partial Scholarship Programme to Bible college students

"In 2015 I have applied for the Scholarship in SIM since I was struggling to pay my fees and I was not working. By God's Grace I was granted the scholarship which help me to continue with studies with a Cape Town Baptist Seminary. It has helped me very much because I am still studying at the college even this and my tuition is fully paid for this semester as well. You have lightened my financial burden which allows me to focus more on the most important aspect of school, learning. Your generosity has inspired me to help others and give back to the ministry. To serve God in my community. I hope I will be of good use in my church as you have helped me. And my future plans is to stay in pastoral ministry and teaching God's Word as I believe that God has called me for."

There are more people like Thembelani that we are wanting to support in their training for ministry, so would you consider becoming a prayer partner or giving financially? If you would like to receive prayer updates, then please let us know on za.projects@sim.org, and we will send you regular e-mail updates. If you are able to support this work financially, then gifts can be given through the following bank details:

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

Please quote the project number ZA86474 when donating and let us know about the donation on za.projects@sim.org. ■

Thank you for your prayers and gifts.

Bearing fruit for the True Vine

by Brian Heffron, SIM SA journalist

Republished from SIM.org.za

In 1955, Tina and Ned* – young in body, marriage and faith – stood together and offered their lives to God’s missionary work.

To some, it may seem that He never called them. They never joined a mission. They never worked in full-time ministry. They never moved to a distant land for the sake of preaching Christ there.

It would be very, very shortsighted, however, to say they had not participated in missionary work. Through prayer, donations, encouragement, and service, Tina and her late husband proved very faithful servants of their beloved Lord.

Tina said she and Ned were new Christians when they married. Tina had come to faith as she prepared to marry someone else and realized that her plans were different from God’s.

“The crossroads came in my life where I really knew it was either God’s way or it was downtrend. The Lord was merciful to me in saving my soul,” she said.

She and Ned, friends since childhood, began courting and were married in 1954.

“When we got married, we were both newly committed Christians, and we knew that the Lord must come first in our lives because that is what you have to base your marriage on. Otherwise, it’s going to be a failure,” she said.

A year later, they were living near friends who hosted Canadian preacher Dr. Oswald J. Smith during his evangelism crusade in Pretoria. Because they lived only a block away, they were able to visit him and were in the audience when he asked all present to consider entering missionary service.

“Without looking at each other, we just both stood up and said if God called us, we would be willing to go, and that was sort of the beginning of our interest in missions,” she said.

In 1956, they started a monthly meeting in their home to pray for missionaries. The gatherings lasted many years and included members of several different churches. They would pray for about twelve missionaries serving in Benin, Ethiopia, and Nigeria and take a collection that was sent to SIM.

“It was really a gathering of every sort of person who



was interested in missions and who was happy to pray, and we used to collect the money that they gave every month and I used to send in this money to SIM. Through the years, we just always had this missionary prayer meeting, and as I said, the Lord never called [Ned] and myself specifically into a missionary setting, but we were always involved with missions,” Tina said.

“SIM was always the main mission that we were involved in,” she said.

Supporting missionary work from the home front was not always easy, though. During the years of international sanctions against apartheid, Tina said, they continued to pray for more workers to join the harvest, but none from South Africa could go to other lands. She also used to feel disappointed that the Lord had not called them to serve directly as missionaries. Eventually, though, God comforted her with this portion of 1 Samuel 30:24: “The share of the man who stayed with the supplies is to be the same as that of him who went down to the battle. All will share alike.”

Over the years, Ned and Tina also hosted many missionaries home on furlough and planted a church over a period of seven years. They served on missions boards, even when his work took them to England for five years. A geneticist, Ned worked for the government as a plant breeder, developing new varieties of grapes, peaches, and strawberries. Tina worked as a physiotherapist and raised their family.

Although the Lord never called them to full-time

missionary service, they hoped to do short-term missionary work once Ned retired. Instead, he began working with a farmer, Aat Hoekstra, to develop new varieties of table grapes.

“When [Ned] started doing this private breeding, he always said, ‘I never got any specific payment except just thanks, and I didn’t actually get any royalties for anything I developed because I was working for the state, but if I develop anything in the next phase of my life when I’m retired, then that must definitely go to missionary service,’ and that’s how it started. When Ned was really ill and he was hardly able to speak, with Mr. Hoekstra standing on the one side of the bed and I stood on the other side, and he still said to me, just remember what I said about royalties to missions,” Tina said.

Aat Hoekstra provided space and workers on one of his farms, Ned the expertise, and the Lord the blessing. They developed five successful cultivars, which they named the Delight range: Muscat Delight, African Delight, Tropical Delight, Starlight, and one seedless variety, Evans Delight. Ninety percent of the grapes are marketed overseas, but ten percent go to markets in Johannesburg.

“[Ned] was on the farm daily, doing what he could,” Aat said, adding that Ned’s motivation and goal were always clear. “He used to say, ‘I would like one day, that if there were any royalties, I would like them to go to missions.’”

And so they have. Even though Ned died over ten years ago, the revenues from his work have continued to bless their local church and several SIM missionaries.

“I can just, with a joyful heart, say to Mr. Hoekstra, ‘Yes, please, make out the cheque,’ she said.

“It’s a real blessing to receive it every year, because it tops up their support for a number of missionaries,” said John Berry, SIM South Africa’s stewardship officer. “Missionaries can’t do their work without support.”

Aat said he receives letters every year from people who have been blessed by Ned’s share of the royalties. He said they shouldn’t thank him but Ned and Tina especially, because his share goes to the farm’s expenses.

John said Tina supports missionaries personally and through Ned’s royalties. For the past few years, seven missionary individuals and couples have received shares of the royalties. Among those supported has been John, who said Tina has often prayed for him and sent him notes of encouragement.

“She’s a regular prayer warrior,” he added.

Like Tina, Aat lost his spouse, Annaline, seven years ago. He still reads her 1933 Afrikaans Bible and treasures the marks she made in it, such as underlined verses. They give him another glimpse into her strong faith and what was important to her. In a similar way, he was blessed by seeing Ned’s faith.

“Absolutely a man following in the footsteps of Jesus; more better, I can’t explain it,” Aat said. “He was absolutely a friend and person you could one hundred percent trust ... It was a pleasure to be with him, always

positive, always smiling; a fine man.”

Knowing Ned and Tina was one of many blessings in his life, Aat said.

“I think the most important thing for me today is never to stop thanking the Lord for everything we can enjoy, everything we can experience and to be alive and to live with beautiful people around,” Aat said.

At 85, Tina said she is unable to do outreach anymore, but she loves to support and encourage missionaries through writing to them and praying about their work.

“To me, that is a joy. To have the joy of the Lord is my strength,” she said.

Tina was reluctant to share her story, not wanting the attention, not wanting to receive praise for what she and her husband had done with their lives and resources. She therefore did not want her or Ned’s real names to be used in this story. She hopes, however, that their example might reflect God’s light to others and direct them to praise Him and consider their own role in furthering His kingdom.

“I hope that people will realize that the mission field is the world, not just a little area around our churches, and if they have the means, to consider giving,” she said. “Half of it, I suppose, we’ll never know until we get to glory.” ■

* Names have been changed

“I am the true vine, and my Father is the gardener. He cuts off every branch in me that bears no fruit, while every branch that does bear fruit he prunes so that it will be even more fruitful.

You are already clean because of the word I have spoken to you. Remain in me, as I also remain in you. No branch can bear fruit by itself; it must remain in the vine. Neither can you bear fruit unless you remain in me.

‘I am the vine; you are the branches. If you remain in me and I in you, you will bear much fruit; apart from me you can do nothing. If you do not remain in me, you are like a branch that is thrown away and withers; such branches are picked up, thrown into the fire and burned. If you remain in me and my words remain in you, ask whatever you wish, and it will be done for you. This is to my Father’s glory, that you bear much fruit, showing yourselves to be my disciples.’ – John 15:1-8 (NIV)



Digging into the roots of mission

by Brian Heffron, SIM SA journalist

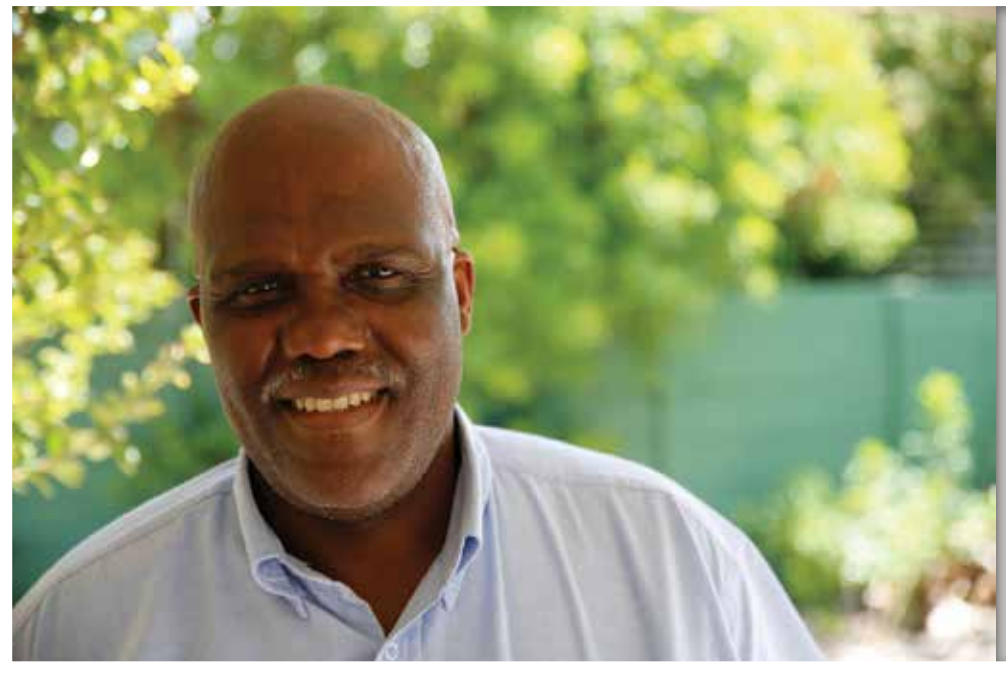
To find the way forward, one must first examine what has come before and gain a clear sense of how it has shaped what is now.

For that reason, SIM South Africa country director Siegfried Ngubane undertook a month-long research trip around South Africa last summer. An encourager and listener by nature, Siegfried approached many church and community leaders and members to hear their understandings of history and their views on things today. He visited sites in Eastern Cape, KwaZulu-Natal, Mpumalanga, Limpopo, Free State, and Northern Cape.

“The whole thing was divided into three questions: number one, I wanted to look at what God had done, the history; number two, I wanted to look at the current, the now — what is the result of that; and number three, what can we learn from that, in order to do missions better in the future?” he said.

“In all my traveling, different questions were around those three. ‘Have you met missionaries?’ ‘Do you know missionaries, what they’ve done, what kind of, where they come from,’ all those questions, which give me history, then we’d talk about the result. ‘Do we have churches?’ ‘Do we have people who are now in missions as a result of that?’ ‘What other things can we do better?’ ‘What did they mess up?’ ‘What are the wrong things they did?’ So those were the kind of questions; they were open-ended questions. I would start the conversation, allow people to give me their story.”

The tour covered churches, theological institutes and communities spread through most of South Africa. Siegfried visited Port Elizabeth, Alice, and the region of Mpondoland in Eastern Cape; Port Shepstone and Ixopo in KwaZulu-Natal; White River, Nelspruit and Barberton in Mpumalanga; Polokwane in Limpopo; and Paul Roux, Senekal, and Bloemfontein in Free State. In Northern Cape, he set up base in Kathu for visiting Olifantshoek, Dingleton and Kuruman and for an excursion into Lykso and the Taung region of North West. Upington and Calvinia were his last stops in Northern Cape, and he visited Cederberg, Western Cape on his way back to Cape Town.



“There are many other areas where God has had His work started, but unfortunately one cannot cover all of them,” Siegfried said.

Before completing his report, he plans to visit several areas of the Western Cape early this year. He also hopes to visit several Bible colleges in Mpumalanga to explore how their missionary origins have shaped the work they do now, especially two that have thrived under local leadership.

“Because, you see, the problem is that we go as missionaries, we start God’s work, and if that work remains our work, when we pull out missionaries, then everything falls back. But these two colleges, they continued,” Siegfried said.

On parts of his trip, Siegfried was accompanied by family or friends. His son travelled with him the first week, and his wife Maureen joined him later. Friends from Germany also joined him on the road. “It was a great blessing; I thank the Lord for that opportunity,” he said, adding that his son was doing matric then. “I don’t know what exactly he’ll be doing now, but for me to spend that time with him was very, very important. It was time to just bond and just pour out and spend time praying together, talking together, but I also think that it was time for him to prepare him for his independence.”

Sometimes, Siegfried’s trip shifted from researching missions to practising missions himself.

“In Ixopo, I didn’t have much of history of missions, so I found myself more in mission activity, visiting churches in that area. I had the opportunity to do things like preaching,

but I also had my friends from Germany, who came for a family visit, and we ended up forming a short-term team with them, right in a very rural village of KwaZulu-Natal,” Siegfried said, adding that they visited people in their homes, encouraged and prayed for them, preached in a local church, and officiated at a wedding.

“If I can kind of summarize all that I have learned, well, missionaries were children of their time, especially in our time in South Africa. It wasn’t an easy time, so other people would share a lot of pain, the way they were treated by missions or missionaries, and some of the missionaries themselves would share some painful memories of how they were treated by their colleagues but also by the people living there. It wasn’t easy, with a lot of mistakes, so that’s negative, but there were a lot of positives,” Siegfried said. “The gospel was preached, churches were built, but the focus of missionaries in the past was, number one, the gospel, number two, education, number three, health, so all these in one way or other came out in my interviews.”

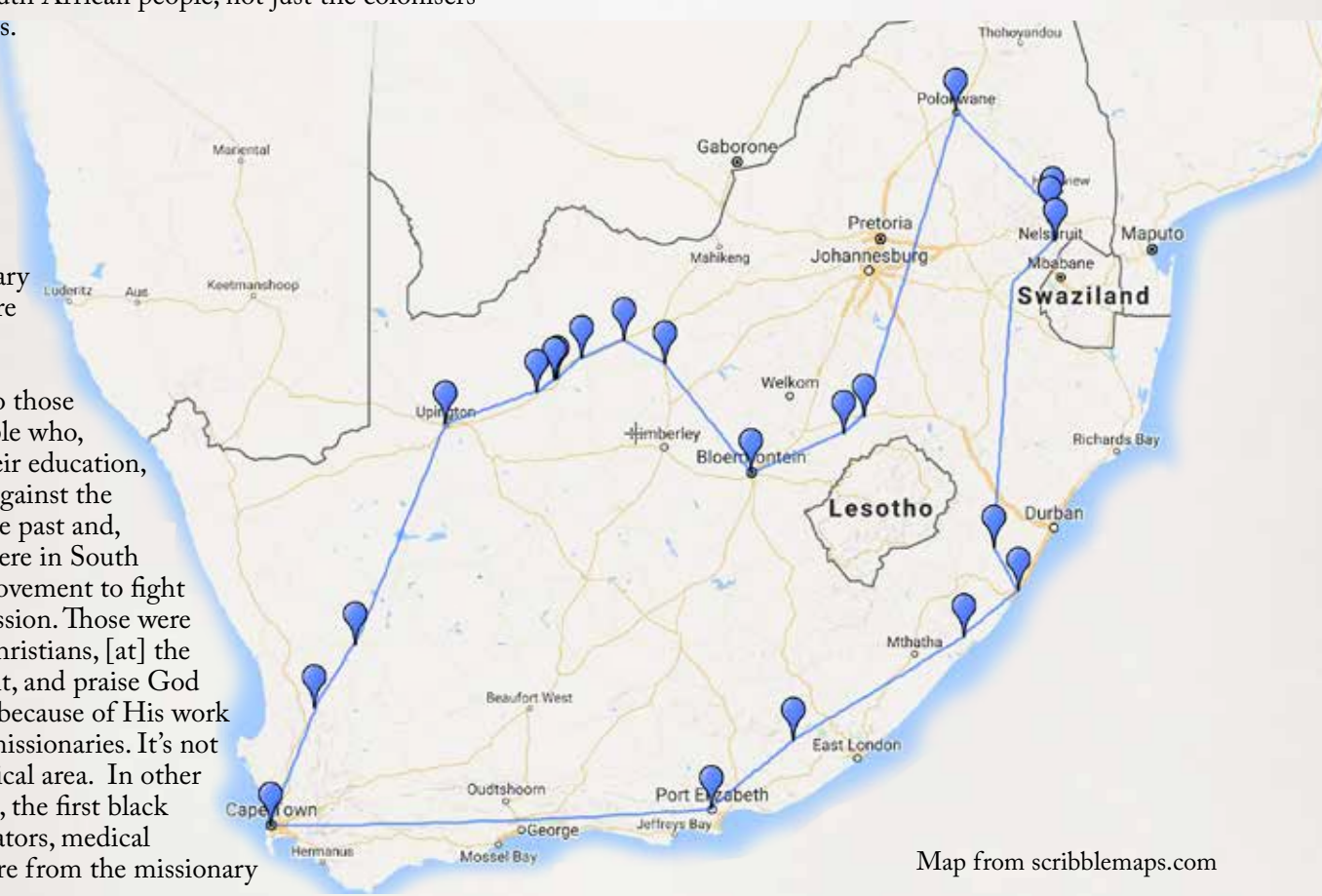
Siegfried said missionaries proclaimed the gospel, planted churches, and started schools and hospitals that served the South African people, not just the colonisers and Christians.

“I want to add another positive: most of the good, quality leaders came from missionary schools or were educated by missionary endeavours, so those were the people who, because of their education, would stand against the injustice of the past and, who started here in South Africa, the movement to fight against oppression. Those were evangelical Christians, [at] the beginning of it, and praise God that that was because of His work through the missionaries. It’s not only the political area. In other spheres of life, the first black authors, educators, medical personnel, were from the missionary schools.”

Siegfried hopes the lessons of his trip — and the seeds he planted in relationships — will help SIM SA better participate in the changing face of missionary work. Although for many years, missions tended to be “from the West to the rest (of the world),” many missionary organizations have become more diverse in both their sending and serving locations and in the Christians

participating in God’s Great Commission. With so much history though, many Christians in South Africa still think that missions is for Caucasian people to do and others to receive.

“There’s still a lot of that, unfortunately,” Siegfried said. “Look, I think that there’s a lot of ignorance about missions because of that, and as a result, I think — I’m giving the way forward, I’m talking about the future, which needs to happen now — that missions agencies like SIM have a responsibility to educate the church of God for missions. By ‘church of God,’ I’m referring to all the church, all sectors, black, white, and all churches. We need to be going out there, we need to be visible, we need to bring awareness, and that’s all part of education, because missions is from God Himself; He is a missionary God. So unless we mobilise the whole church to take the whole gospel to the whole world, we are failing in missions.” ■



Map from scribblemaps.com

If you would like to explore your role in God’s work of crossing barriers with love to those living and dying without Christ, then please contact SIM SA’s candidate coordinator at 021 715 3200 or za.sendingenquiries@sim.org.

Rebuilding relationships

by Brian Heffron, SIM SA journalist

Even in the body of Christ, brothers and sisters sometimes lose touch, but reunions can rebuild relationships and bring about great joy.

Such is the case with SIM SA and the Luchazi people in the Northern Cape.

“My hope, my dream, my prayer is that we strengthen our relationship with this church, because it is an SIM partner church,” said Siegfried Ngubane, SIM SA country director.

The Luchazi originally came from Angola and Namibia but were no longer welcome there because they had fought alongside South Africa’s forces in the Angolan War. The South African government allowed them to settle in mining towns in the Northern Cape.

Before its merger with SIM, Africa Evangelical Fellowship had begun working with the Luchazi people in South Africa. AEF helped plant a church among them, sent a Luchazi man to Union Bible Institute in Pietermaritzburg to be trained as a minister, and ordained him after he had completed his training. The relationship somehow ended, but the connection has been remembered through the thirteen Luchazi churches, which include “SIM” in their names.

Siegfried hopes to involve all stakeholders in the resumed relationship – the Luchazi people and their church here; the churches in Angola, Namibia, and South Africa; and the SIM offices in all three countries.

Siegfried first heard about the Luchazi in Northern Cape when he became SIM SA’s country director in 2010. The SIM director overseeing Namibia and Angola emailed Siegfried about them and asked him to help the church register, but he was unable to find any information. Two years later, he was at an SIM conference equipping pastors with ministry books when someone mentioned them again.

“My passion started growing from there,” Siegfried said, adding that he soon started receiving emails from the Luchazi pastor who’d been trained by AEF many years earlier. They finally met in person at a conference in 2013.

“Because of those three encounters – first the Namibian director, second the Pastors’ Books Conference, and thirdly, when I met him in person for the first time – I planned that when I went to the Northern Cape, I would go straight to his church and his denomination, so that’s why I contacted him,” said Siegfried, who visited the pastor on his national research tour.

Now that contact has been re-established, Siegfried

hopes to renew SIM’s relationship with the Luchazi people, but he wants to take care that it happens in ways that strengthen the church rather than create conflicts or dependencies.

“I think we can really start working alongside the pastor, strengthening his ministry, especially that of leadership, and not take over from him ... It’s strengthening his leadership, but it’s also making sure that he’s raising his own leaders, where I think the mission can partner with him. And from there, think about the people themselves,” Siegfried said, adding that the church only has its original pastor.

“As the only pastor, I cannot see how only one man can look after so many churches; even if he’s got good theology, the church will struggle But at least one positive thing is that he and all his leadership see this big need, that they need training in discipleship, leadership development and theology.”

One of the first steps, Siegfried said, is helping the Luchazi church network with other entities and resources, such as Nehemiah Bible Institute. NBI offers affordable theological training that can be completed at a distance, and their materials are available in Portuguese, which is one of the languages the Luchazi speak. Siegfried also plans to make a return trip to the Luchazi with a team of missionaries and church leaders. ■



No one should live and die without Christ

by John Berry, SIM SA stewardship office

Christmas is a time when we celebrate the coming of the Lord Jesus Christ into the world some 2000 years ago as a baby, to live a sinless life amongst us and then die a cruel death on a cross to bring salvation and forgiveness of sins to those who would believe in Him. But there are still thousands of people who have never heard this message and live and die without hearing God’s good news.

SIM’s purpose statement reads “Convinced that no one should live and die without hearing God’s good news, we believe that He has called us to make disciples of the Lord Jesus Christ in communities where He is least known.” Many of SIM’s missionaries are working amongst people who would otherwise never hear about Jesus and His love. Let me introduce you to some of them.

Jonathan and Genine Thomas are working as missionaries in South Thailand in church planting. The Thai people are held captive by the complex web of Buddhism, traditional culture, spirit appeasement and even occult practice and less than 1% are Christians. Some of them have recently accepted Christ and are growing in their faith through the efforts of missionaries such as Jonathan and Genine.



Stephan and Corné Walters are working among the Quechua people in Peru, South America. These isolated people live in the Cotahuasi Canyon, the deepest canyon in the world, and have their own false religion. They would never hear the Gospel unless people like the Walters went to live among them.



Learnmore Manyenya is a new SIM missionary who lives in Masvingo, a rural part of Zimbabwe. He walks 20 to 30 kilometres each Sunday to teach Zionists the true message of the Bible. The Zionists in Zimbabwe have a lot of false beliefs even though they use the Bible. They teach mainly from the Old Testament, that the Holy Spirit doesn’t live in all Christians but only in a few prophets, and that polygamy is Biblical, and they practise Mosaic Levitical laws. Without Learnmore’s ongoing commitment, these people would not hear the true Christian message.



We are so grateful for these dedicated servants of God. They make sacrifices in their lives and those of their families to share the Good News with people who would otherwise live and die without ever hearing the Gospel. Thank you for your partnership with SIM and our missionaries through your prayers and financial support. Without your support, these missionaries would not be able to go and serve amongst people that have not heard the Good News. Your gift of R100, R200, R500 or R1000 or whatever the Lord leads you to give, can help speed the message of God’s love to a needy world. If you would like to partner with SIM in the work, please use the enclosed response form or deposit your gift directly into our bank account.

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Strengths and opportunities: SIM Angola reviewed

by Brian Heffron, SIM SA journalist

Reach the children. Serve the youth. Mentor through ministries. Those are among the recommendations compiled recently by SIM's country review of its work in Angola.

"Angola has been isolated for a long time, partly due to colonial policies in the old days, then due to the civil war and a Marxist regime. And, of course, Portuguese as its official language has also served to create a language barrier as well," said SIM Angola Country Director Sheila Fabiano, who has lived there since 1979.

"Thus, having a team come with members from other African countries was very much appreciated by all on the ground here, and we have gained a new set of eyes with which to see our context."

SIM Angola consists of about 25 adults who are Dutch, German, Swiss, American, Canadian, and Brazilian. Ministries include urban medical centres, theological education, translation, agricultural ministries, and a rural flying doctor

programme.

The review team included Dave Bremner, a South African serving as an SIM International Deputy Director, and two SIM International missionaries serving in South Africa – Southern Africa Zonal Coordinator Marcus Baeder and Champion for Student Ministries Emma Brewster. Split into four pairs, the team visited about twenty sites and conducted over 200 interviews in only two weeks. Planning, logistics, and transportation were big challenges for such a large country, but pilots and airplanes from Mission Aviation Fellowship (MAF) helped tremendously. One pilot even helped translate for one of the interview teams.

"We would not have been able to do that without them, that's for sure. The distances are just too vast — I mean, the country's bigger than South Africa, surface-area-wise — and the road systems are not in very good shape We did some driving, but for all the major distances, we had to fly," Marcus said.

Sheila and Marcus both said that the review process went well, adding that everyone was glad to be consulted and asked for their observations and stories. Reviewers spoke to SIM staff and partners, including leaders of SIM's partner church, Union of Evangelical Churches of Angola (UIEA, also known as União).

"All those partners were very helpful, all the different institutions we got to interview," Marcus said. "They were quite willing to provide information and feedback The main church partner there — the União church — for sure was very helpful."

"I think this reflects the fact that the country review team did a good job of presenting their enquiries in a way that elicited participation and not suspicion," Sheila said.

One of the recommendations was to develop child and youth ministries. Sheila said that 68 percent of Angola's population is under 25 years old, but most evangelical churches offer them



few programmes other than singing in the choir. The UIEA has been asking for missionaries to help in developing such programmes, she said, but no candidates have sought those assignments.

"The country review team's recommendations will give new impetus to recruiting specifically for people to work with children and youth and train Angolans in this type of ministry," Sheila said. "It is not something that was unknown, but it was good for the country review team to recognize it as a priority need."

Other recommendations included strengthening the leadership team, defining their mission and vision more clearly, and examining whether it would be beneficial and worthwhile to register SIM Angola as a separate, legal entity instead of continuing under the aegis of the UIEA. During the Marxist era, groups like SIM were not permitted to register on their own. Sheila said the UIEA leaders are godly and wonderful and that SIM and UIEA continue to have a close, amicable relationship.

The team gave a summary presentation before leaving Angola and is preparing its complete report, which Marcus is compiling. He expects the fifteen to twenty page report to be finished soon. Once the report is finalized and translated, Sheila will present it to SIM Angola's board members and the executive of the UIEA. They will then determine which points to address first and how to do so. Sheila said she would have appreciated suggestions of how to implement the recommendations or examples of how other countries addressed similar challenges.

"It will take us a while to work through all the recommendations and to figure out what to do and how," Sheila said. ■

Prayer requests:

- for continued good partnerships between SIM Angola and national churches, particularly the UIEA, so that they can work together to meet the challenges and opportunities for ministry in extending God's kingdom, as well as in strengthening believers.
- for wisdom and discernment in determining priorities and strategies for ministry.
- for God to call more personnel to join the work in Angola, especially those with a heart and calling to work with youth, and in all areas of capacity building.

OPPORTUNITIES TO SERVE

Are you interested in exploring ways you might offer your talents to God through SIM South Africa?

Whether long-term, short-term, or just volunteering, opportunities exist within SIM for a wide variety of skills and abilities.

If interested, please contact our candidate coordinator at 021 715 3200 or za.sendingenquiries@sim.org.

by Brian Heffron, SIM SA journalist

The LIFT Team

Even in areas as developed as Cape Town, short-term missions teams can offer practical help toward full-time missions.

For two weeks in October, 2016, eleven believers from Northern Ireland laboured at the SIM South Africa mission owned house currently assigned to my family.

Addressing issues raised by several families that have lived there, the team remodeled the kitchen to a more traditional layout. They moved the stove from an isolated corner with virtually no counter space to a prime spot near the sink, and added counters to both sides; moved and updated electrical outlets; swapped the locations of a door and window; replaced the floor and wall tiles throughout the kitchen and dining areas; fixed



some plumbing issues; repurposed the kitchen's old stable door as a puppy gate for the yard, and did some gardening and pruning.

They also worked at SIM SA's mission house for visitors. They reinforced the garage roof with a stout new beam, redecorated and repainted some areas, re-stained doors and window frames, and fitted new curtains.

The workers came through a Northern Irish group called LIFT, which stands for Labour In Faith and Trust (<http://www.liftni.org>). Founded in 1999, the group has sent hundreds of teams in partnership with more than forty different missionary organizations. On LIFT's web site, the group declares, "We believe that God's love can be shown through manual labour and skills. God's family is made up of ordinary people with different skills and talents. Not everyone has the gift of preaching or teaching, likewise not everyone has the gift of being skillful with their hands."

A LIFT team in 2015 worked mainly at the SIM SA mission house for visitors, fixing roof leaks, fitting a shower, replacing lights, and repairing an outside staircase. That team also addressed a few issues at the SIM family residence, then occupied by SIM missionaries from Northern Ireland.

This year's LIFT team was led by Brian McCormick, who has done twelve LIFT trips (including last year's to SIM SA). A joiner from

Newtownards, County Down, he also lived 2½ years in George, Western Cape as a missionary working in building, feeding, sports outreach, and short-term missions programmes.

"Come and try. You may not like it, but if you do like it, it'll stay with you the rest of your life," Brian said.

Ken and Freda Valleley from Armagh arrived before the team and helped prepare things for them. They have volunteered with SIM Ireland for twenty years; Ken is on the SIM Ireland board, and both of them have helped debrief missionaries and served several short stints in Cape Town as managers of SIM SA's mission house for



visitors. Knowing that many missionaries get exhausted, he said they enjoy helping provide a pleasant, restful setting.

John and Betty Stratton, also from Armagh, agreed. "It's just been lovely seeing the transition to make it more comfortable for them," she said.

Kyle Anderson, a plumber, from Lisburn, County Antrim, said he came because, "The Lord gave me the skills and good hands to do practically anything. I give thanks for the hands He gave me and the health I have." Kyle enjoyed "the satisfaction of seeing it done, knowing we've helped" and experiencing beautiful examples of

God's creation around Cape Town, such as the mountains rising from the ocean and the Southern Cross constellation.

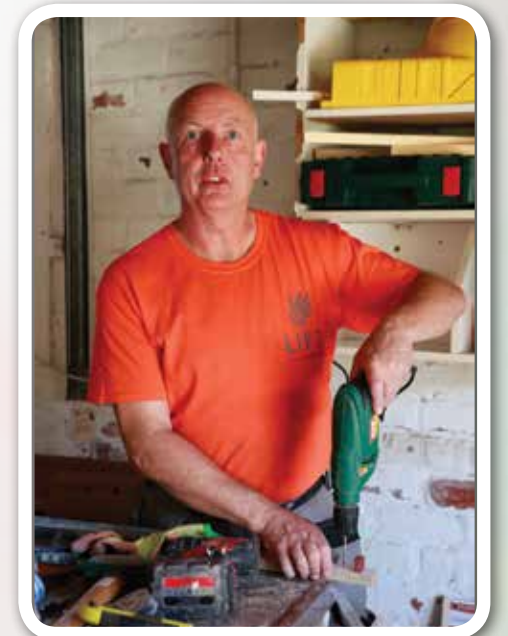
Gordon and Valerie Martin; are a manager of support services at a hospital, and a retired teacher from County Armagh. Valerie said she had always wanted to do short-term missionary work after she retired, and Gordon had been on a LIFT team to France. While here she visited some Bible students and taught women at an English language class how to ask and answer questions at a doctor's visit. "It's just seeing God answer and undertake for us and keep us strong and well, the faithfulness of God," Valerie said. "I think it's made us realize there's a certain difference between home and here," Gordon added.

Irene Grant, a Queens University microbiology lecturer from Belfast, heard of LIFT from Ken and Freda, who attend her brother's church.

She described herself as a handy enthusiast and enjoyed using that to help others while on sabbatical.

Other LIFT team members this year also included Kenny Russell and Nancy Montgomery. Retired Cape Town contractors Jack Holliday and Robin Kerr served as project managers, determining the work, sourcing the materials and overseeing progress each day.

"I think it's good interaction," Robin said with a smile. "It's a pleasant thing: they mutter at me and I mutter at them, and we get on." ■





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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. If you are interested in SIM visiting your church please contact John Berry at za.stewardship@sim.org

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

Would you like to partner with us through your giving to SIM?

We have a team of staff and volunteers working at our offices in Tokai that are involved in helping our missionaries share God's love with a needy world. It costs money to run the office as well as print this *SIMNow* magazine. Your financial contribution to SIM will help cover these costs and ultimately enable the gospel to be taken to those parts of the world where Christ is not known. Please complete the Response form enclosed in this magazine and send your gift by cheque or direct deposit to SIM. You can also give on a regular monthly basis via our SIM debit order. These are our banking details: SIM Southern Africa, Standard Bank, Blue Route Branch, Branch code 025609, account number 07 287 7014, reference Your Name C17. Please fax a copy of the response slip and deposit slip to 021 715 3220 or email za.finance@sim.org or post to PO Box 30027, Tokai 7966.

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