

More Missionary Insights

By Michelle Connor

In August 2007, I, along with a team of 15 people from all over the United States, flew to Durban, South Africa for 10 days to help build homes for children who have been orphaned in the village of Ntshongweni. This heart-filled ministry is through several partnership organizations, such as Habitat for Humanity®, Christ Church Lutheran in Phoenix, and Shongweni Lutheran Church in South Africa, whom are committed to giving relief to children devastated by both parents who have died from the HIV/AIDS pandemic. During my short trip to South Africa, I experienced God working through a particular servant named Pastor Senzo Majola.

Senzo Majola is the pastor of the Shongweni Lutheran Church in Ntshongweni. I met Pastor Majola last summer when he attended our Basic Mission Planter Training (BMPT) in Irvine. I have one vivid memory of Pastor Majola at BMPT sharing a song with the group called "Thank You Jesus", which he sang in both English and in Zulu. I remember this because he had such a powerful and beautiful voice. I could feel that he truly believed the words he sang and there was a rich meaning to him. Now having the opportunity to see him in the trenches of the mission field, I can see how God has used this servant. The insights I gained were not so much revolutionary to me, but more of a reminder of what Christ has called us all to do as His followers.

Go and Multiply

"Therefore go and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, and teaching them to obey everything I have commanded you. And surely I am with you always, to the very end of the age." (Matthew 28:19-20)

I discovered from conversations with Pastor Majola that not only did he find BMPT to be helpful to mission work in South Africa, but also he has applied a lot of it to his ministry and trained other pastors that have not been able to receive our training. This is exactly what God calls us to do. Go and make disciples ... including mission planters! Well, maybe He did not say it like that exactly, but the words Jesus spoke in the Great Commission still apply here. As missional church workers, called by God, we are called to share our knowledge, to build up leaders, and equip them with the tools necessary to go out into the mission field.

The Forgotten

"Speak up for those who cannot speak for themselves, for the rights of all who are destitute. Speak up and judge fairly; defend the rights of the poor and needy." (Proverbs 31:8-9)

There are so many orphans in South Africa, mainly due to the AIDS pandemic, that they often are overlooked or forgotten in their communities, but people like Pastor Majola have not forgotten them. He has been the voice for the orphans in his community. Pastor Majola, an orphan himself, has made it a priority in his ministry to help these orphans see that they are not forgotten and are precious children of God. Who are the forgotten or overlooked in your community? How might God be calling you to reach them?

Basic needs

"If there is a poor man among your brothers in any of the towns of the land that the LORD your God is giving you, do not be hardhearted or tightfisted toward your poor brother. There will always be poor people in the land. Therefore I command you to be openhanded toward your brothers and toward the poor and needy in your land." (Deuteronomy 15:7, 11)

Pastor Majola has been active in the process of recommending the families to receive the Habitat homes. He saw that these families' basic need of adequate housing was

not being met and did something about it. We too are called to help those in need, with even their most basic needs...food, shelter, clothing. Through this love in action, that is where people see Jesus in us, through us. Jesus, our perfect example did this often (all the time) during his earthly ministry.

Beyond church members

“Dear children, let us not love with words or tongue but with actions and in truth.” (1 John 3:18)

It is evident that Pastor Majola has a heart for all the people in his community, not just those who attend his church or are Christian believers, but everyone. This is his outreach, his way of opening the doors to share Jesus with the people that are hurting the most. In my opinion it is every bit as important to extend help in Jesus' name to those outside of the church than exclusively to those inside the church. Those who do not know the Lord need our witness and good works, not so we can earn “brownie points” with God or them, but so this may point them to Jesus, the author of our faith and the reason we feel compelled to show love in action.

Whether these insights were a reminder or affirmation of the work you are already doing, I pray that you continue to be open and willing to be used by God in new ways that will draw more people into a relationship with our loving and compassionate Savior.

Moment Extras

Questions for Reflection

1. Who has God given you a passion to help/serve?
2. How far outside of your comfort zone are you and your church willing to go to effectively live out the gospel in your community?
3. Who are the forgotten and overlooked in your community? If you don't know, how might you find out? What steps will you take?
4. How might God use your church to reach them with the gospel?

Links - LCMS Short Term Missions

[Asia has 'huge need' for short-term mission teams](#)

[About LCMS short term mission trips](#)

[LCMS mission team opportunities available now](#)

[A List of short term mission opportunities \[PDF\]](#)

[African Orphans Project](#)

[Habitat for Humanity](#), [Thrivent Financial for Lutherans](#), [Christ Church Lutheran](#), and the Lutheran Church in Southern Africa (LCSA) - working with its congregation in Shongweni - have partnered to construct homes for orphans and vulnerable children. Over the next five years this partnership will not only construct 75 homes, but will also provide support and outreach programs to local orphans and families that have been directly impacted by the HIV/AIDS pandemic.