

# HANDS ON DECK

ISSUE THIRTY-FIVE



*“God’s presence was right there with us in that place.” - Melissa Warren*

## KABWE, ZAMBIA

Melissa Warren, Long-Term Volunteer (Australia)

Melissa was recently in Kabwe, Zambia where she visited several communities, spent time with the Service Centre team and built relationships with Care Workers.

She shares about her time in Susu Community, about 2 hours from the Service Centre. They joined the Care Workers one day as they all came together for a time of worship and praise. Melissa shares, “It was so refreshing. God’s presence was right there with us in that place.” As they broke off into separate groups as men and women, the Care Workers listened to each other’s struggles and shared deeply what was in their hearts.

That night Melissa stayed at Sanday’s, the CBO Coordinator’s home. Melissa says, “You can’t underestimate the value of those times, sitting and hearing what’s happening in the community on a deeper level. It was a really precious time for me being with Sanday”.

On a Holy Home Visit in Susu, Melissa met 13-year-old Nikolas\*. He broke his leg 3 years ago, and has a wound that’s still infected. His father is a Care Worker, but he is scared to take Nikolas to the hospital as he is afraid they will amputate it. Nikolas has not been in school for 3 years. “Nikolas’ family have given up and lost hope. We spent time with them, encouraging them and praying with them. Thankfully, the Service Centre

will follow up with them to make sure he is getting proper care” Melissa says.

While visiting Miswa Community, Melissa spent time talking and getting to know Daniel, the CBO coordinator, and his wife Catherine. She says that Daniel does not even have grade 1 schooling, but he is able to converse well in English and his own language. He’s a pastor of his church and also the coordinator of the CBO that cares for 50 children. Melissa shares, “I asked Daniel how he got involved in ministry, and he said that he had a dream that he was a shepherd caring for a flock, and when he asked his Pastor about it, he was told he should become a pastor himself. So he just started a church! Daniel is caring for 50 children, and doing incredible things”.

Throughout the whole week, Melissa said she could see how God really showed up everywhere they went. “We all need to continue to pray for our brothers and sisters in Kabwe”.



## CONTRIBUTORS

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Melissa Warren  
Jackie Okindah  
Craig Rebro  
Kristi Swarbrick

## ZIMBABWE

Kristi Swarbrick, Long-Term Volunteer (Canada)



During her two weeks in Zimbabwe this last month, Kristi visited communities she had never been to before and heard many heart-breaking stories. She shares about being challenged by her desire to have her eyes opened to what God wants her to see. Kristi shares, "As Project Accountant, I work a lot with budgets and numbers. Visiting the communities in Zimbabwe really helped to bring these numbers to life. It reminded me that behind every budget I work on, and behind every number, there is a child."

In Honde Valley, Kristi went on a very challenging Holy Home Visit. Hope\* is an 11-year-old girl who lives with her mother, who is mentally and physically disabled, and her two ageing grandparents. "Hope is so young, having to take on this responsibility to care for both her mother and grandparents and do almost everything on her own. It broke my heart." Kristi says this Home Visit was really special for her, and felt like God was challenging her in many ways.

"I sometimes struggle to look beyond my own goals and what I want to accomplish", she shares. "Before I left for Zimbabwe it was my desire to have God's eyes and ears, and as I left I still felt I was too focused on myself and where I needed to be." Kristi says it is still a desire of hers to slow down more, and to be attentive to God's voice.



A family Jackie met while in Nigeria

## Hope for Nigeria

Jackie Okindah, Long-Term Volunteer (Kenya)

On Jackie's most recent trip to Nigeria, she had the opportunity to experience the expansion in the Service Centre Team and to assess potential areas of growth in our communities. The exciting addition of a new member, Vivian, in the Lagos Service Centre has eased a burden from the team. Jackie was able to spend time with Vivian, praying with, and helping her to understand the heart of Hands at Work. Jackie shares, "It was a blessing getting to know her and watching her as she grows and works alongside Toyin and Taiwo."

Jackie shares about what vulnerability looks like for the children in Ilage Community. "Every day these children come to the community school, and then go home and begin working – selling food items in the community". Jackie explains that 'play' is very much the language of a child. In this community, however, 'play' is a very foreign language. Children are forced into labour at a very young age, and not given any opportunities to play and have fun. "It is our desire for Ilaje

Community to have a proper Life Centre", she says. "We are trusting God to have a breakthrough in helping the Care Workers and Care Givers to understand why the idea of 'play' is so important for a child." A huge blessing, however, are the teachers at the community school. Jackie says they are very "hands on" and care a lot about the children.

Jackie also had the chance to visit a community called Badia. "We once worked in this community but stopped due to unhealthy leadership. We decided to go back, feeling that maybe God is not done here yet." As Jackie walked through the community, she realised that no one needs to tell you how tough life is there. "You can just see it from the way the women dress, it's swamped with commercial sex workers. There is also no water, no clinics, and people live in very small shacks made of plastic paper." **As Jackie sat with a crowd of children from the community, she said there is no question that these children are the most vulnerable.** "We don't know what is going to happen yet in Badia, but we are trusting that God will show us what he wants us to do."



## Swaziland

Craig Rebro, Long-Term Volunteer (US)

Craig reflects on the few days he recently spent in Swaziland, and how it has reminded him of the desperation due to the drought, and the work God has called him to do.

He shares, "Every week we talk about the drought, but this showed me how bad it really is. As we were driving into Swaziland, everything looked beautiful, lush and green. I didn't get it at first, but then we started walking. Seeing the people - the grandmothers and the children - people are dying. It's a desperate situation."

Craig shares about a young boy he met who attends the Life Centre in Msengeni. "We walked up a hill one morning and met Sibusiso\*. This young boy, maybe seven

years old, was carrying a large bundle of firewood on his back. We found out later that he was sick and that there are consequences if he doesn't bring home firewood every day. To make matters worse, he walked more than 2 km with the firewood. We gave him water and dried apricots as he was visibly exhausted."

Craig met another young boy who was holding a tattered bible in his hands. The boy did not understand that there was an old and a new testament. "My friend and I sat with him, and we went through all the different books of the bible so he understood how to read it. We talked and prayed together." Craig explains that this reminded him of what Jesus says in Mathew 28:19. "Therefore, go and make disciples of all nations, baptising them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit."

"Instead of making plans, checking off our lists, and moving on to the next thing, we often found ourselves just sitting, waiting for Jesus to show up", Craig says. **"We are the salt and light of the earth. This trip reminded me why we do things the way we do, and really connected me to the work that God has called us to".**

## Prayer Points

Please continue to pray with us. We are encouraged as God continues to bring hope in the midst of many challenges.

- Pray for our new community in Swaziland, Shoka, as they began feeding 50 children at the start of July
- Pray for the expansion in Ilaje Community, Nigeria and the growing Lagos Service Centre
- Pray for the Mutare Service Centre, Zimbabwe, as the drought is widely impacting the country
- Continue to pray for unrest in our communities in Mozambique, specifically in Macadeira: pray for peace, reconciliation and healing
- Pray for Goma, DRC, for God to guide us in how to effectively support our communities
- Pray for all the teams arriving over the next few months - for their hearts to be broken by the poorest of the poor but also understanding God's love and hope; for a transforming experience.