

# HANDS ON DECK



## CONTRIBUTORS

in this issue of Hands on Deck

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Michael Mwila

Cecelia and Peter Matibula

David and Jane Newsome

Keristen Bonin

Adrian Bonin

Bill Van Geest

Tim Van Hoffen

Luwis Lengwe

*Shout for joy to the Lord, all the earth.  
Worship the Lord with gladness; come  
before him with joyful songs. Know that  
the Lord is God. It is he who made us,  
and we are his; we are his people, the  
sheep of his pasture. Enter his gates  
with thanksgiving and his courts with  
praise; give thanks to him and praise his  
name. For the Lord is good and his love  
endures forever; his faithfulness continues  
through all generations.*

*- Psalm 100*



*“She didn’t believe that God could love her. We praise God because after talking with her for a long time, we were able to lead her to the Lord.” – Sylvia Chinyanta*

## LIVES GIVEN TO THE LORD

Sylvia Chinyanta, African Leader (Zambia), Luanshya Service Centre

Recently, Sylvia spent three weeks in the Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC) supporting the Likasi Service Centre in its daily rhythms. Having these regular exchange visits is a key part of discipleship and investing into our African leaders.

“In Kambove community, I was able to support the SC in meeting with the youth. I had the privilege of sharing about Christ with the youth and how it’s important that He is the priority. I could see how the youth hunger for God’s word and are so encouraged by it. It was good to see how the Likasi SC invests into the youth, because in Zambia we find that you need to push the youth a lot to stay engaged.

While I was there, I was also able to participate in a Maranatha Workshop in Toyota Community. This was not my first time doing one of these workshops, but my experience was so different. There is so much power in preparation and praying for the week before it starts. On the day we went, we prayed for the week ahead for all that God was going to do. On the first day, Mama Angel shared the ‘Jesus We Know’. It was a short message but many things came out. I noticed a lady who was crying and knew that we needed to follow up. Hearing her story, we learned that her name was Rebecca\* and she was a witch doctor, known for doing abortions and being an evil person in her community. Even her husband had left her because of what she did. She didn’t believe that God could love her. We praise God because after talking with her for a long time, we were able to lead her to the Lord.

Later in the week, we spent the night at her home and found that she had taken in Jane\*, a young mum who had just given birth. She had been kicked out of her home but Rebecca, even though she was involved in evil things, still had a heart for the vulnerable and brought Jane into her home. We woke up in the night to Jane coughing and she revealed to us that she was dying. We spent the night praying for deliverance and led her to Christ. Sadly, she passed away a week later, but I’m grateful that she accepted Christ as her Lord before she died. My heart has peace knowing that we led her to the Lord.”



## THE TRUTH OF THE GOSPEL

Michael Mwila, African Leader  
(Zambia), Luanshya Service  
Centre Coordinator

In the middle of June, there was a pastors' training at Kachele village in Zambia for pastors from the communities in the Chisamba, Kabwe, Kitwe and Luanshya regions. The purpose of the training was to take the pastors deeper into understanding their calling to serve the most vulnerable by studying scripture.



"The pastors that we brought are the ones that we have built relationships with in the communities where we are working. We know that our Care Workers, children and Primary Caregivers go to these churches. It can be challenging when they hear about the 'Jesus We Know' at the Care Point but then go to churches where they hear a different gospel. Our prayer was that our pastors would be equipped with the truth of the gospel, enabling them go back and share the same vision and gospel with their communities.

We talked about the calling of being a pastor and how some don't feel like they are called. Some pastors think that they need things and money to be called but they don't. We looked at the story of Abraham and how he was called to leave everything behind. When God calls you, you need to leave what you have.

Together we studied scriptures on the calling to care for the poor and vulnerable in our community. How do we treat them? Many pastors had read these scriptures before but revelations started coming. We looked at scriptures throughout the Bible that highlighted the churches' responsibility to care for the vulnerable and how they worked together to care for the vulnerable.

There were confessions from pastors that they don't care for the vulnerable well. They confessed that many times they focused on what people in the church can do for them instead of caring for those in the community. At the end of the training we talked about what it means to be led by the Holy Spirit and put word into action. Just preaching the word without putting it into action is not enough.

Since the training, we have started hearing testimonies of our pastors sharing the truth of the gospel with their churches and putting word into action. We need to pray that it will continue to bear fruit."

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## GOD AT WORK

Cecelia and Peter Matibula, African Leaders (Zambia), Chisamba Service

Cecelia shares, "During our time in Oshoek, I was able to visit Houtbos and Sthobela C communities. I've seen those who are less privileged and have deep wounds but I hadn't expected to see that in South Africa. While we were at the Sthobela C Care Point, the children were showing up at different times because it was exam time. It was good to encourage the Care Workers to feed the children in groups but to also spend time praying over them.

It was fun to talk with the Care Workers in South Africa about what things are like in Zambia. I was able to encourage them by what we do in Zambia but also learn about how they do things here."

Peter says, "I experienced the presence of God at the Hub. I've seen that all the good that is happening in South Africa comes out of worship and praise. Our family at the Hub has developed a link between worship in the chapel and worship in the field. The fruits in the field are a direct result of worship. I saw how Hands at Work is working in South Africa but I also saw God at work."

## THE FATHER'S LOVE



In June, it was exciting to have the Bonin family and two members from Bethany Church come to spend two weeks in Zambia serving alongside the Kitwe and Luanshya Service Centres. They brought joy and energy to each person they came into contact with.

Keristen Bonin, team member from Penticton, Canada:

"I came to Africa in September 2021 and God broke my heart for the people of Africa. I knew that I wanted to come back with my family. God gave me this scripture: "Whoever wants to be my disciple must deny themselves..."

I wanted to bring my kids but I didn't want them to get in the way. It ended up being the exact opposite of that. We saw how it was not a burden but a blessing. Especially on the last day as we washed the feet of our Care Workers. The kids got involved and it was a beautiful moment for us as a family."

Adrian Bonin, team member from Penticton, Canada:

"When Keristen came, she met three boys from Mulenga community. And, as a family, their story of trauma and abandonment broke our hearts. We have a picture of them on a wall in our house and we pray for them, so meeting them was a blessing and so encouraging. We are so thankful for Hands at Work

and the Service Centres. I know it is exhausting but my prayer is that we keep going. I can only imagine the Father's love and how this breaks His heart if it breaks mine this much."

Bill Van Geest, team member from Bethany Church, Canada:

"My heart was filled by our time in Africa. My heart has been in this work for a long time as my family has been connected. Finally, it was my turn to come. I feel like I now have two homes. I don't know if I can come again because of my health but, if not, I will do what I can at home to make sure others will come. I will do what I can to help God's children. God will work through all of us to make sure that His will is done."

Tim Van Hoffen, team member from Bethany Church, Canada:

"I first came to Africa many years ago and my experience changed the trajectory of my life. Before I left, I felt like God was giving me the scripture in John 15 where Jesus shares the command to abide in Him. Throughout my time in Africa, it kept coming back to me through so many people.

When I was doing a Holy Home Visit, I was so encouraged by Sylvia. She was willing to be vulnerable and speak into the life of a mother. I really did see the scripture come alive where it talks about mourning with those who mourn.

Maranatha has always been a community close to my heart. On our appreciation day for the Care Workers, I was overwhelmed by the love that they showed us. It felt so tangible. It was more than just about the money – it is a partnership. We are partners together in Christ, loving and serving the children. I know that the challenges are still great but God is doing things. And I'm thankful that God is faithful in the work that He is doing."

## GRATEFUL HEARTS

David and Jane Newsome,  
International Office Volunteers (UK)

In June and July, David and Jane from the UK International Office came to South Africa for the gathering of International Office volunteers. It was a great opportunity to have them with the Hands at Work family in person, something that doesn't happen very often. While they were in South Africa, they shared some reflections on what is happening in the UK.

"The last two years of the pandemic have been challenging for us all, but there has also been much to be thankful for within Hands at Work UK. There have been many ways in which we have been able to deepen our connections and go further in our understanding of the Hands vision through online meetings. A particular blessing for us personally has been the weekly rhythm of our Watchword group, which has become a deep place of prayerful support and encouragement for all of us.

For a long time we have wanted to strengthen our finance team in the UK and we have been blessed with Martin and Clare Beavon. They suddenly emerged after Martin had been part of a West Midlands team. He now handles our day-to-day finances, whilst Clare has taken on all the safeguarding administration for visiting teams. We are really pleased that Martin and Clare will be part of this year's West Midlands team and will have the opportunity to experience Hands at Work more.

Especially important for us this year is the gift of two new partnerships. Turning Point Church from the far north of Scotland has started to partner with Matsinho B and St. Andrew's Church, Shifnal, has formed a partnership with Malakota.

It's wonderful to be back in South Africa. As we were sitting on the veranda at the Hub and looking over Masoyi community, we realised how the community has changed since we first came in 2006. It was symbolic and made us think of how we too have grown and developed through serving with Hands at Work. It has been great to see so many new faces at the Hub – our young African leaders have so much to teach us."





## BEING ATTENTIVE

Luwis Lengwe, African Leader (Zambia), Kabwe Service Centre

In June Luwis had the privilege of spending time in Nigeria, supporting and learning from the Lagos Service Centre.

“Going into my time in Nigeria, God was asking me to be attentive but I didn’t know how I would do that if I didn’t know the language. But I learned that the quality of attention I give to a situation, God can use for His glory. God was telling me to be quiet, to learn something new, and to be a better servant of God.

The poverty in Nigeria is so deep. The people in our communities live to survive. The Care Workers and Primary Caregivers work hard and try their best but it is tough. People live in fight mode. The kids are harsh and are hard on the outside. But the Care Workers and Lagos Service Centre (SC) are working to soften their hearts and share about Jesus.

When we went on a Holy Home Visit in Temitope community, we met Boise\*. She sells chilli to survive.

When I saw where she stays, I cried. I wondered how they could sleep in the rain, how they keep themselves. Sometimes they sleep in the ally. I didn’t know what to say or how to encourage her. Yet she seems happy and loves her children. Thankfully the SC is helping them to find a safe place to live.

We also visited Alugo, the new community that we are serving in. They have not started feeding yet but we are giving food parcels to the families who have been identified as the most vulnerable. We met Pastor Bola, who is a strong Christian in a community of Muslims. She even runs a community school for the kids without charging anything. The Muslims are fighting her. They cut down her crops and kill her animals when she leaves her home but she refuses to back down. She has an amazing heart for her community.”

## PRAISE AND PRAYER REQUESTS

At the Maranatha Workshop in Matsinho A Community, Mozambique, there were 12 Care Workers who were baptised. Praise God for their boldness in making this public declaration to follow Jesus. Pray that they will stand firm in the challenges that come and continue to make Christ the priority in their lives.

Praise God for the gathering that happened at the Hub in South Africa for International Office volunteers. Pray that everything that was discussed bears much fruit in the months and years to come.

Pray for each of Hands at Work’s African leaders, that they will continue to grow in their understanding of what it means to care for the most vulnerable. Pray that they will be bold in pursuing the lost, the broken and the destitute. Thank God for the way that they are bringing the truth of Jesus to the poorest of the poor communities across Africa.

Pray for the follow up that happens after each Maranatha Workshop, that our Care Workers and Primary Caregivers will continue to grow in their understanding of Christ and His love for them. Pray for each Maranatha Workshop that will take place this year, that God will already be preparing the heart of each person in attendance. Pray for those facilitating to have wisdom and a sensitivity to the Holy Spirit in knowing what topics to cover.

As we have passed half way in the year, thank God for the way that He has been moving so far. Pray that He will give renewed energy and drive to each person involved with Hands at Work. Pray that we will not grow weary but will remain strong in the face of different circumstances.