

HANDS ON DECK



CONTRIBUTORS

in this issue of Hands on Deck

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“The Spirit of the Lord is on me, because he has anointed me to proclaim good news to the poor. He has sent me to proclaim freedom for the prisoners and recovery of sight for the blind, to set the oppressed free, to proclaim the year of the Lord’s favor.” - Luke 4:18-19



“As long as we ourselves are prisoners and oppressed, we can’t open our spiritual eyes to see what God has for us.” – Gloria Tembo

A PEOPLE SET FREE

Gloria Tembo, African Volunteer (Zambia), Finance Team

Kara McLaughlin, International Volunteer (Australia), Regional Support Team

Earlier this year, a ‘go team’ was sent from Zambia to the DRC. The team members were Kara McLaughlin, Gloria Tembo, Shadrick Kabali from Zambia, and Farai Gunhe from Zimbabwe. The purpose of the trip was to support and serve alongside Angel and the rest of the Likasi Service Centre, as they care for the most vulnerable children.

Gloria shares: “The Watchword for this year has been so powerful and it has come at the right time when everyone needs it, including us. It speaks about how God has anointed us and set us apart. He wants us to set people free and realise the captives, but it starts with us. What it is that we have in our hearts that we are taking in to communities. As long as we ourselves are prisoners and oppressed, we can’t open our spiritual eyes to see what God has for us. As we went into the communities of Likasi (DRC), we met people who were vulnerable, broken, oppressed and blind. These are the people who God has called us to set free from all the brokenness,

bitterness that they carry. And He has set us apart to go and preach the good news to the prisoners.”

Kara says: “It’s interesting because when you go to these places, you can quickly start to wonder if you are able to offer anything. But very consistently Angel (coordinator of the Likasi Service Centre) reminded us that we can’t do anything without the Holy Spirit. For me, I was wrestling because I was seeing so much injustice and pain, and I was trying to think about how I was going to fix it. How am I going to make this right? But over and over I had to get to the point where I realised that it’s only Jesus and the Spirit who can heal all of us and our communities.

A huge standout for me was how the children and the Care Workers prayed. It’s really interesting because I can see how Angel and the Service Centre have been falling on them. There is a deep understanding that unless we confess our sins before our Father, we can’t be set free. Even when the Watchword was shared, there would be times when people started confessing the things that held them in bondage and sin. It was so humbling because people would be on their knees crying out to God for mercy and forgiveness. The beatitudes came alive because when we are poor in spirit and mourning over our sin, there

is humility. When that happens the Spirit of God starts to free people, and reveals to them that they are so loved. That was a huge lesson for me – how do I confess and humble myself before the Father? Am I able to recognise the areas where I need freedom?”

Gloria says: “In our second week there, we had a time of feedback from the church mobilisation that had been done previously in Likasi. It was clear that it was a powerful time and that the Holy Spirit was moving. The purpose of the mobilisation was to awaken the church to their duty in caring for the vulnerable in their communities. We long to see the church leaders take responsibility to ensure that their communities are cared for – orphans, widows, those who are sick. Through the mobilisation they were able to stand and give feedback that they are willing to come and help because these are their children. It was so amazing how God opened the eyes of the church leaders to know that they are all part of the calling in caring for the vulnerable children and families in their communities. They are willing to work with the Care Workers to help care for the children – who are the future generation. They are committed to doing Holy Home Visits and walking with the children in a Godly way.”



PRAISE AND PRAYER REQUESTS

Praise God for the expansion that is happening across Africa – for the hundreds of additional children who are being reached and cared for. Pray for each child – that they will feel loved, cared for and accepted. Pray for each leader to be equipped and encouraged as they share the hope of Christ.

Praise God for the North America Advocates Gathering that took place in Canada at the beginning of May. It was a fruitful time as stories were shared and people were able to go deeper in understanding their role as Advocates. Pray that the seeds sown that weekend will bear fruit in the coming weeks and months.

Praise God for the rains that have happened in Mozambique. Pray that the harvest will be successful.

Within the communities we serve, particularly in South Africa, there are many children who don't have the necessary documentation. This means that they are unable to access government services and the schools will be unable to let them finish school. Without South African identity documents they will not be able to obtain legal work in the future. Pray for Hands at Work leadership to have wisdom and discernment as they seek the way forward for these children. What lies ahead for them as adults? How will they provide for their own families?

Pray for the church leaders in Kisunka, and each community that we serve in across Africa. Pray that they will understand and eagerly take up the biblical mandate to care for the vulnerable.

JUSTICE IN THE BIBLE

Josh Snyman, African Volunteer (South Africa), Projects Team Leader

In March, there was a three-day training on Justice for pastors from Phophonyane Community, and several came from further afield.

Josh shares, "I had not been in this place for a long time – a place where I felt overwhelmed and ill-equipped to teach. I had only recently started digging into justice and what the Bible says about it, even though I have learnt so much by sitting in on the Hands at Work Bible School sessions. This put me in a place where I had to surrender and tell God that if He didn't show up, then I couldn't do this. I was totally reliant on Him."

If we had simply gone and shared about justice, they wouldn't have understood the whole picture. We started with the theme that runs throughout scripture which is the dwelling place – God wants to dwell with us. After this we spoke about what it looks like to live in the Kingdom.

After we shared on a topic, we would give time for discussion, which was important because it ensured that they understood what was being shared before we moved onto the next point. A lot of the pastors said that they had not heard these things before, even though they had been running churches for years. They were greatly encouraged, but the biggest challenge comes from hearing the word and then actually doing it. They can't just teach the word and expect the church to do it – they also must live out what the Bible says.

One of the ladies shared that this was the first time she had realised that Jesus' bloodline was full of 'outcasts'. She shared that she herself had experienced rejection in the community because she was an orphan growing up, and is now a widow. But during these sessions she heard that she is so loved, and she could feel it."