

Mending nets. Catching fish. Ordinary mundane tasks that were interrupted by an invitation. Come follow! Had they but known, following was only part of it. They ate, healed, invited, fed, communed, sang, celebrated, walked, learned and witnessed.

What were you doing when you heard Jesus's invitation? I was riding back from UMW Assembly in Kentucky. We were talking of missions we had been part of! my friend Jan commented, "My life was changed forever on the Zimbabwe mission."

"Zimbabwe? We have missions in Zimbabwe?"

"Oh, yes."

Africa had been on my husband Dewey's bucket list for years. When I told him of the Zimbabwe mission opportunity he agreed that that was the way to go to Africa. The very next week, Sylvia Reimer posted her invitation to join the mission team Zimbabwe 2015. Our adventure had begun. When I found out that we each were responsible for a \$4,000 mission project, travel and expense fund, my practical side started shutting the door. Jesus kept knocking and my husband reminded me that whenever and whatever we have needed has been provided. We made and sold pickles and chutney at our local farmer's market. Business was good, cucumbers grew well and folks were exceedingly generous. Neighbors, friends, family, and new friends contributed and encouraged us.

Ten months later we arrived in Zimbabwe. Our first morning we awoke to a family of monkeys playing on the tin roof! We met, ministered and were ministered to by a loving, grateful culture. Families who had so little shared their oranges and bananas with us. The musical Shona language so often broke forth into singing that I started smiling whenever I heard it.

We were inspired by the vision of Africa University. The dream is becoming a reality. United Methodists worldwide can be proud.

Christianity is growing in Africa. Every church we visited is full to overflowing on Sunday. Eight hundred to one thousand plus worshipers walk miles to sing and pray together. A two-hour service is ordinary. Fellowship and caring for one another, witnessing to the presence of the Holy Spirit are universal. Christian education is valued and supported. The young people we encountered are anxious to learn and contribute to their church and country. The nurses, doctors and educators we met have been empowered by Methodist support and are accomplishing remarkable healings and teaching.

Our fourteen-member team built, cooked, cleaned, painted, read, sewed, fellowshiped, ministered, worshipped, sang, danced and played. We met and worked with hundreds of practicing, committed Christians.

I am so glad that I left my nets for a time to be part of the ministry in Africa. The needs are great. Jesus is calling you to minister to Africa, Central America, New York City, across the street, down the block and Pennsylvania farms. Listen for your invitation. .

Joni Lincoln, lay servant, worship/music chair, lay member to annual conference, church musician) in my other life: drama coach, substitute teacher

Upper New York Conference (Fingerlakes District)