



Caroline and Dick Seed

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Location: South Africa



What we do: Training Bible teachers in key theological institutions across the African continent and beyond



Equipping and encouraging where followers of Jesus are in a minority

Dear friends,

This month, we reflect on a difficult situation that people in Southern Africa are facing. At the bottom of this page, the strapline reads, "With Jesus, with each other, to the edges." In a recent CMS training session, the speaker told us that edges are the places where it is particularly difficult to follow Jesus, such as war-torn regions or areas in which Christians are a minority. In our work over the past three months, we have been reflecting on the migration edge where Christian life and faith has been difficult here in South Africa. Some of you may have read about it in the international news.

Mission on the edges of migration

Genesis 13:5–6: "Now Lot, who was moving about with Abram, also had flocks and herds and tents. But the land could not support them while they stayed together, for their possessions were so great that they were not able to stay together. And quarrelling arose between Abram's herders and Lot's..."

A big challenge for people on the African continent is scarcity of resources and the desire to migrate to countries in which there is a better chance of survival. There are push factors, such as war and economic crises, and pull factors such as increased opportunities for employment. Since independence in 1994, South Africa has been a place where people have migrated to, many of them finding opportunities for work in the informal sectors. However, in recent years conflict has arisen over access to employment and resources, rather like the conflict between Abram and Lot's herders in the passage above. This type of conflict is clearly nothing new. Abram resolved it peaceably by separating the herds and going in a different direction from Lot. In South Africa however, the conflicts have led to what has widely been called xenophobia (the dislike of foreigners). Over the past three months, we have seen increasingly violent protests against foreigners, with local people demanding the removal of "undocumented migrants."

Cape Town, where we live, is the most southerly city in Africa. It is a place where migration stops because there is nowhere else to go. Migrants used to form part of the local communities. Some worshipped in local churches. They sold goods on the streets, served in the restaurants and did domestic and farm labour. The protestors set 30 June as the deadline for all undocumented migrants to leave the country. Fearing for their lives, thousands of people gathered in front of their embassies for assistance to flee the country. Churches and compassionate people stepped in to help practically. By the time 30 June arrived, most of the foreigners had left for their home countries by bus, or on flights to West Africa.



Colourful wildflowers in early spring

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**With Jesus
With each other
To the edges**



Thousands left. Whole areas have been emptied of people. Now, their absence is noticeable. Where are they? How are they managing to survive back in the countries that could not support them? The grass is not cut. The crops are rotting in the fields. We are left with an absence, a wondering, a silence....

Altogether, it has been a difficult mission edge to navigate.

Training initiatives

Over the past three months, we have been running lecturer training in different modes. In June, we ran Phase 1 of our online certificate course for lecturers from Christian universities in South Sudan and Malawi. We also welcomed David Turnbull, a guest lecturer from Australia, to teach the third module on distance and online learning for the postgraduate diploma. However, our in-person training courses in Angola and Rwanda have been postponed until the risk of Ebola reduces. Please pray that the outbreak will slow down and eventually be eradicated.

Dick led a workshop on contextual curriculum development at the Theological Education Association of Southern Africa (TEASA) conference in Johannesburg at the end of June and in early July we both led an in-service training day for GWC lecturers. After that, Caroline spent a week in Oxford meeting with the director and editor of the Bible Commentaries from Muslim Contexts series, planning the next year of research and writing. There are several new commentary teams starting to write. Please pray for them, especially the teams from Ethiopia and Kenya. At the end of July Dick participated in the International Association of Mission Studies conference in Pretoria.

New development

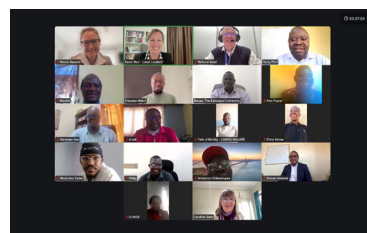
We are grateful to the Lord for the privilege of serving him in circumstances and ways that represent the difficult edges of life in Africa. We look forward to working with the Portuguese speakers online over the next few months as we wait for an opportunity to return to Angola after the Ebola risk subsides. We also welcome Bishop Flavio from Brazil, our Portuguese translator and interpreter (and previous CMS local partner in Latin America), as he prepares to run the TALHITE course in his new theological college in the favelas of Recife, Brazil. It is amazing to witness first-hand a global mission movement linking theological training in Africa and Latin America so closely!

Preparing for home leave

We are looking forward to coming back to the UK in October–December this year to share more of what the Lord is doing. Please pray for us as we plan our home leave and work ahead to prepare our training courses early for next year. We look forward to seeing many of you soon.

In Christ,

Caroline and Dick



Photos from top to bottom: Online teaching booth; Phase 1 of TALHITE online; Dick at the TEASA conference; West Coast scene



Equipping where followers of Jesus are in a minority

It's encouraging to hear about other people working with CMS. People like Grace, who have completed training for local mission and are now discipling Christians in their rural churches in South East Asia. And in Lebanon, CMS partners are supporting local churches to respond to the urgent physical and spiritual needs of families displaced by conflict. Find these updates, and more, at churchmissionsociety.org/equip

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