



*Thy word is a lamp unto my feet, and a light unto my path.*

— PSALM 119:105

I had the pleasure of visiting Africa University in July of 2007. When our bus pulled up to the university, we were greeted with the school's motto carved into the shrubs: "THE DREAM IS ALIVE." And what a dream we saw— we had a chance to visit with the students about their backgrounds and what brought them to Zimbabwe. Most were from other countries within Africa, many had walked and/or hitchhiked many miles to their final destination, but all shared one common goal: the dream to better their continent. Africa University is a unique place. Higher education is nothing new, but too often the students that have the chance in Africa to attend college leave Africa to do so. While their intentions may be to come back and help their home countries, the lure of the United States, Europe, and the like often proves too strong and the student chooses to stay in his new surroundings. At Africa University, the mission is straightforward. They want to educate the best and the brightest IN Africa so that they can stay IN Africa and help Africa. We heard a sermon when we visited in which the preacher said, "Africans need to help Africa. No one else can do the job." What a great mission that the United Methodist Church has founded by creating a place to debate public policy, health, leadership, and the list goes on. Then, the new graduates are trained to go back to their home country and teach others. Although we can't solve the problems of the continent, the University needs our continued support of funding. Awareness needs to be raised about the good things that are happening in Mutare, Zimbabwe, because one scholarship goes a lot further than just touching one student— the knowledge taught to that student can touch a whole village back home.

**PRAYER:** Dear Lord, Thank you for blessing us with a country that values education. Thank you for an institution like Africa University where people have the chance to dream and make those dreams a reality. Amen.

**CHALLENGE:** Count your books. Reflect on the privilege of having easy access to resources, information, and learning. Please consider giving a quarter for every book that is on your shelf.

*Bethany Thomas, Highland Park UMC Dallas*

**DAY 36, MARCH 18, 2008**

*Therefore encourage one another  
and build each other up, just as in fact you are doing.*

— 1 THESSALONIANS 5:11 (NIV)

My trip to Africa in November, 2002, was to Zimbabwe for the ten-year anniversary celebration of Africa University. What an educational and emotional experience it was! On the University campus there is a group of hedges cut and shaped to read, "The Dream is Alive." The following are three instances in which the slogan was demonstrated.

The Faculty of Agriculture was one of the first established at the University. The lead professor was affectionately called "The Mushroom Lady" because she taught young women how to identify, harvest and market mushrooms so that they could become entrepreneurs and keep their dreams alive.

As a female African American educator, it was most inspiring to attend a symposium of African and African American college and university presidents and witness the determined anguish of African female professional educators, struggling to achieve acceptance as equals in their profession; and to see their faces as they were encouraged to keep their dreams alive.

I met two mature young women students and, via email, became a mentor for them. We three remained close friends until their graduation. One came to the United States to earn a master's degree while the other returned to her homeland tribe to begin a career in social services. Positive encouragement and support helped to keep their dreams alive!

Encouragement and a helping hand can be the difference between finishing well or not finishing at all.

**THROUGH THIS PROJECT WE CAN MAKE THE DIFFERENCE.**

**PRAYER:** Lord, thank you for the dreams of the students at Africa University and for inspiring us to help them to keep their dreams alive. Amen.

**PLEDGE:** I pledge to give \$5.00 to the Africa University project for each volunteer hour that I spend working with the project.

*Gloria H. Lett, Glen Oaks UMC Dallas*

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*“For I know the plans I have for you,” declares the Lord,  
“plans to prosper you and not to harm you, plans to give hope and a future.”*

— JEREMIAH 29:11

As far back as I can remember, I’ve always **DREAMED** of Africa. As a budding poet, at the age of eight or so, many of the words I committed to paper led me back to my ancestral origins in the Motherland.

At the time I couldn’t explain why I was so captivated by the images I saw in National Geographic and on Wild Kingdom. The only thing I knew was that before I left this earth, I had to go there.

In July of 2007, I was granted the gift of traveling to Zimbabwe with St. Luke’s mission team. My lifelong dream was to visit the continent and perhaps gain an understanding about the connection that I’d always felt but could not explain. Pondering how I would feel once we arrived in Africa, I wasn’t sure what to expect; would I cry; would I be apprehensive; would I be afraid; would I feel at home, or would the culture shock be so overwhelming that I would not be able to take it all in. The answer to each consideration was “Yes.” I felt all those things and more.

Any apprehension I felt vaporized with the welcoming smiles, hugs and kisses that were so graciously showered upon us at the Old Mutare Mission Orphanage. Each day I watched scores of Zimbabweans go about their daily lives, and I realized that we had more in common with one another than differences. We all have a desire to be loved, acknowledged and have our basic needs met. No one I met asked for a handout — but it was evident that many could use a hand-up. I witnessed many receiving that hand-up at Africa University — the young minds creating and developing solutions for the Motherland, all fueled by their desires and hope for a better, stronger, prosperous Africa for its people and the world.

**PRAYER:** Heavenly Father, Thank You for your continued grace and mercy for our Africa University family. Move in us and show yourself in a mighty way as we reach across the oceans, land and sea to share the blessings you’ve bestowed upon us with our brothers and sisters in Africa and the world. Amen.

**CHALLENGE:** I will pray daily for Africa and Africa University. I am committing \$1 per day during Lent and will donate that amount to Africa University.

*Dawn Adams, St. Luke “Community” UMC Dallas*

**DAY 38, MARCH 20, 2008**

*It is for this that you were called – that you might be a blessing.*

— 1 PETER 3:9B

In his autobiography, *Rise Up and Walk*, United Methodist Bishop Abel T. Muzorewa reflects on his life from its beginnings in British-controlled Rhodesia to his days as a leader in both the church and independence movement that led to an independent Zimbabwe.

As he relates the story of his life, two factors emerge as foundational, the church and education. For a young Abel Muzorewa, the two were inextricably linked.

One of the most touching accounts involves Bishop Muzorewa's stories about earning childhood nicknames while a student at Old Umtali Methodist School. He was a member of a student choir that featured African songs and dances. In one, the students acted out a farmer's life as they sang:

*'Tariwamba tariwamba basredu' (We have started, we have started our job.)*

*'Uyai mese muzotibatsirawo' (Come all, and help us, please.)*

The bishop remembered that the students followed each verse with a response of the sound and motions of hoeing, 'Zendeu! Zendeu! Zendeu!', striking the floor with each shout. "I was so completely absorbed by the song and its actions that for some time thereafter students called me 'Mr. Zendeu,'" he wrote.

The place where Bishop Muzorewa was born, educated, and experienced his spiritual rebirth is now called Old Mutare. Soon after being elected as a bishop in 1968, he led his annual conference in donating land near Old Mutare to fulfill the dream of building a university for the young people of Africa.

Today, Africa University is a beacon of light for Zimbabwe and Africa. Some 1300 students from across Africa live, learn, work and grow as the new generation of African leaders. Through our sacrificial Lenten gifts, we can be part of the dream to complete the job that Bishop Muzorewa and others have started. Come all, and help us, please.

**PRAYER:** We give thanks for all of those whose dreams and sacrifices have started the job of building Africa University. Give us the will and show us the way that we can help. Amen.

**CHALLENGE:** To commit my "book and reading material" money to help meet our goal.

*Joan LaBarr, Plymouth Park UMC Irving*

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*I can do all things through Christ who strengthens me*

— PHILIPPIANS 4:13

It is always an honor to be able to share the Good News about Jesus and going to Africa was a perfect opportunity for me. One of my life time dreams included making that trip.

Once it was announced that our church would be traveling to Zimbabwe, I began to pray that God would make a way. Then one of the former members of the Prayer Ministry encouraged me to go. Every week he would ask if I had made plans to go, so that motivated me to start planning.

As I prayed for God to make a way for me to attend, I also asked for creative miracles to see his hand in the work that would be done while there. When the final plans were made, he opened the door of opportunity for me to go. So, again I say, Jesus is a “way maker” as he continues to make a way for me along with my family.

Our church had supported other educational institutions, but I knew this would be different. The NTC held special sessions to prepare us for our trip. However, it could not compare with the actual experience once we arrived. Being in Social Work for so many years my focus was the children’s home and the quality of life the community was experiencing, as well as health issues. What I found was that our African brothers and sisters have adjusted to living a simpler life. Like so many others they are comfortable with their basic needs being supplied and consider every gift as a blessing.

**PRAYER:** Let us stand on God’s word to deliver according to Deuteronomy 8:18. But thou shall remember the Lord thy God; for it is he that giveth thee power to get wealth (what we need) that he may establish his covenant which he swore unto thy fathers, as it is this day. Amen.

**CHALLENGE:** I am going to commit to helping raise the money by asking each ministry in my church to have every member in their team give any extra dollar during Lent towards the total. We will also pray daily until the funds are raised. We are standing on God’s word to deliver.

*Darlene Maxwell, St. Luke “Community” UMC Dallas*

**DAY 40, MARCH 22, 2008**

*Jesus looked at them and said,  
“with man this is impossible, but with God all things are possible.”*

— MATTHEW 19:26

My parents were my role models and had the greatest influence on my life. My father was a teacher, principal and a United Methodist minister. My mother was an English/Spanish teacher and school administrator. Education was important in our home and college was “expected.”

Africa University has many students who did not have this type of influence in their lives. Some are from war torn countries, others from poverty stricken areas, and many students are not financially able to attend college. When I visited Africa University, I met students who fell into each of these categories. What impressed me about the students was that they were highly motivated and possessed an infectious drive to succeed. This motivation was based on an eagerness to learn and becomes a catalyst to influence others to higher academic achievement. These same students will eventually return to their African homelands and become the teachers and leaders in their countries.

Communication hurdles due to the large numbers of different dialects, little-to-no funds, and a lack of trust of people from other African countries seem to present an impossible situation. However, through their faith and the support of the University, students have been very successful and now influence others to seek peace and to love their fellow man.

While these things might be impossible through man, through **FAITH IN GOD, ALL THINGS ARE POSSIBLE.**

**PRAYER:** God help us to see the needs of others and to make their dreams possible. Amen.

**CHALLENGE:** Recognize that whatever support (Large or Small) you provide to Africa University, it will assist students in achieving their lifelong goals. It will also positively influence many countries throughout Africa in the future. Make the impossible possible, through God and through your support.

*Billy Ratcliff, St. Luke “Community” UMC Dallas*

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