



# ALLEN TEMPLE Global Ministries Newsletter

## Feeding Hungry People During a Pandemic

During this global pandemic, for many, food is scarce. Global Ministries supported youth from Mfuleni Baptist Church in Cape Town who organized a soup kitchen and fed approximately 100 people. They plan to organize more soup kitchens in coming weeks. Allen Temple Global Ministries applauds its global youth partners, Rev. Daniso, and members of Mfuleni Baptist Church and community.



## Providing Food to Children Living in a Home for Disabled Children

Rev. Vusi Funda, Pastor of Crossroads Baptist Church, with support from Global Ministries, provided fresh fruits, vegetables and staples to elders in the community and children living at a home for disabled children. Rev. Funda and Crossroads members also hosted a soup kitchen serving hot food to people in the Crossroads community living near the church.







**School uniforms bought for children in Soweto, South Africa and Accra, Ghana.**





Global Ministries provided school supplies to children in Ghanaian school.

## Cultural Exchange – Ghana & the United States

Global Ministries will collaborate with the Religions Department at the University of Ghana, Legon, to bring together young scholars from the United States and Ghana. These young scholars will engage in cultural exchange and critical research to promote understanding of religious traditions, practices, and issues in their respective countries.







## Theophous Reagens

Allen Temple Baptist Church

The Changing Paradigm of  
Missions

2020 Pastoral Study Project  
[www.Louisville-Institute.org](http://www.Louisville-Institute.org)

## Allen Temple Global Ministries at the Louisville Institute

In February 2020, I attended a conference at the Louisville Institute where I discussed our ministry work with pastors and church leaders from throughout the country. I provided an overview of our ministry work and mission model, highlighting the experiences of the youth who have participated in our sojourns.

### Here's a summary of my presentation.

Our cultural exchange, service learning, and capacity building program helps youth and young adults in Oakland, California, and Soweto, South Africa reconnect with their faith, and connect their faith to their desire to change their circumstances, and the circumstances of their communities. Our program encourages youth and young adults to create bilateral community service projects that provide leadership development opportunities, while supporting them to serve as agents of change in communities where their churches are located. In this program, youth and young adults on both sides of the Atlantic collaborate on community service projects designed to address some of the common challenges faced by young people in both South Africa and the U.S. Our ministry provides a platform for young adult Christians to appreciate the social justice aspect of Christianity and practice social justice ministry both at home and in other parts of the world—a form of service learning.

Scholars postulate that African American Christian youth and young adults are trying to figure out how to respond to social issues that many of them experience. However, they do not see this work as connected to a larger history of Christian witness or to any Christian community. Scholars

warn that because of this disconnect, the African American Church is at risk. Young people who have participated in our program, because of their involvement, seem to be able to connect their faith with both their personal concerns and their innate need to engage in social justice advocacy and community service. More specifically, these cross-cultural engagements often caused reconversion experiences that have grounded these young Christians more securely in their faith, in their personal identities, and in some call to action.

Young people who have participated in our program, missionaries and hosts alike, because of their involvement, seem to be able to connect their faith with both their personal concerns and their innate need to engage in social justice advocacy. And we have reaped an unexpected bonus benefit—the revitalization of our young members has had an infectious impact on our church as a whole. After eight years of programming, the support from the Louisville Institute is helping us better document and more formally evaluate our program, including standardizing our training curriculum and training materials and building in a rigorous evaluation component into the program. By doing this we hope to be able learn exactly how the program motivates young Christians and to share our lessons learned with other congregations so that they too can experience the revitalization that God has blessed us with.

If you have any questions, or would like to receive more information about our work, please feel free to contact me at 510.333.6021 (or by email at [theophous@gmail.com](mailto:theophous@gmail.com)).



## Kit Organization

*Several of our young people from Allen Temple (including Harrison Harvey and Michael Sneed) presented a proposal requesting support for a youth initiated and led local organization designed to provide training for civic engagement and a safe space for young people to exchange ideas.*

### **Identify the specific communities that will be impacted by the project.**

Various subcultures of the Bay Area will be impacted by this project. First the use of the bay area will have a space as well as the necessary tools to deal with the world that we live in today and to feel informed and connected with their city and their community. The Black teens and young adults will also be able to gather in a safe space and discuss the past, present and future of themselves as well as the Black community as a whole.

### **Describe the problem(s) being addressed by your project.**

#### **How big of a problem is this?**

The lack of a safe space to exchange ideas an issue. Though I would be remiss if I did not say that there are bigger issues in this world and in the bay area, finding a way to connect youth and bring them together in a safe and intelligent space could get the ball rolling on solving some of the other issues, the major issues that we have in our community. This initiative can trickle down to impact the entire Bay Area. Not only for people of color but all of the residents who live here and are impacted by the black culture that is prominent in our cities. But in terms of the broader issue of racism, it is a huge issue, an issue we need to face head on.

### **How long has this problem existed, and how has it changed over time?**

The issue of racism has been around since the beginning of time in some respects. But it's really shown itself with the history of slavery and then trickling into systemic racism that rears its evil head even to this day. The racism may have changed its faces and its names but its evil and oppression have still reigned supreme. This device and tool and ideology of putting people of color down and keeping them there has been one that has gone on for too long. From the days of slavery, to the days of segregation to now the realities of racism and oppression is here just like it has been for all of the years before. And, the issue of uninformed and disconnected youth have been around for a while as well. Though there has been an increase in the connectivity because of forms of social media and technology, the ability to spread positive and correct information has somehow become very difficult. But the youth have always been an important part of every fight. Whether it's the fight for equal rights in the LGBTQ+ community or the fight for improvement in the justice system and the prison complex, the youth have always been an important and present voice.

### **What will this project accomplish?**

This project will help inform and unify the youth of the Bay Area, while also shedding light on various ways to fight systemic racism and to combat the evil of this world today.

*Written by Harrison B. Harvey*



**“Our calling as Christians is to dare to name and confess God from within the womb of politics, from the heart of our commitment to justice.”**

### **Young Adult Global Ministries Zoom Call USA/ RSA: Civil Rights**

During our Zoom call in June, members of our Young Adult Global Ministries Cohort asked questions about the history of the Civil Rights Movement and the significance of the Black Lives Matter Moment in that larger movement. South African members asked whether and how they should support us. I brought in some activists (Rev. Brian Woodson and Dr. Allan Boesak) to enrich the conversation. They met in July and our young people asked some very insightful questions. It was a rich and uplifting discussion.

**Rev. Brian Woodson**, Pastor of Bay Area Christian Connection in Oakland, CA, is an instructor at the Leadership Institute at Allen Temple, and Director of the Emerging Leaders Program. Servant Woodson is a bright and influential activist in the Bay Area community.

**Dr. Allan Boesak**, also a human rights activist, is a living leader of the Anti-Apartheid Movement in South Africa. Dr. Boesak has lived and taught at several universities in the U.S. and RSA. He is the author of

several books, including recently published “Pharaohs on Both Sides of the Blood-Red Waters”.

The discussion was rich and here is a glimpse:

**Question: Rev. Boesak, one of our sojourners came to me during one of our trips to Soweto and asked what is this that I am feeling, Rev. It feels good and something here in South Africa seems to make me feel at peace and encouraged. Can you speak to us about this feeling, about what Soweto has to do with East Oakland; about what Oakland has to do with Soweto?**

Dr. Boesak answered: ‘I had the same experience when I first attended Allen Temple Baptist Church.’ He attributed it to our shared culture as Africans. He said

he felt at home in the worship service because of its African-ness. He felt a kinship because of our shared experience with slavery and apartheid. He felt an almost instantaneous comradeship and fellowship with African Americans and that has continued until this day. “We feel, what we feel for one another, because of our shared oppression, and our shared hopes and dreams for justice and freedom. There is a cultural and political kinship.”

**Question: Rev. Woodson, some elders watching the Black Lives Matters Campaign growing and seeing people gather recently in hundreds of cities around the world, have said they believe**

**this moment offers our nation, and perhaps our world, something unique. Some of them have likened this to a religious or spiritual movement. They also suggest that we have an opportunity to do more, to be even bigger and more dynamic than our predecessors in the 20<sup>th</sup> Century Civil**





**Rights Movement. Do you agree? Is this a unique moment? Is God in this moment?**

Rev. Woodson responded, yes, the pursuit of justice is the Lord’s work. What that means is, it is bigger than us and it is a spiritual movement and a unique moment. Yes, we are at a unique time in history because of a pandemic, and perhaps in part because of both pandemics, the hearts and minds of our young people are really focused on a more just society. Yes, we have an opportunity to do more, be even larger and more dynamic than our predecessors if we press on, no matter what. We must continue the fight. No matter what, we have to continue to engage, to protest, to create our narrative; we must keep moving. We cannot stop pressing because of minor changes. We must write our narrative and keep it and press for systemic change. We must press on to eradicate systemic racism, no matter what. This new manifestation of the movement has the potential to be transformative.

**Question: One of the young adults asked how she could participate in the struggle for social justice and yet remain Christian?**

Dr. Boesak responded that we would all do well to remember that the world belongs to God. Our calling as Christians is to dare to name and confess God from within our politics, from the heart of our commitment to justice. Naming God means to stake our lives for and with those who are considered of low in status by the rich and powerful. Naming God in our lives and in our politics is naming the hope that never dies, the future that still exists, that is waiting to be claimed by all of us on behalf of all of us, the love that

will not let us go. Naming God means standing where God stands, fighting for whom God fights—the children, the women, and the undefended. What we do in the struggle for justice should be in God’s name. Dr. Boesak affirmed what we believe, that what we do for justice from Allen Temple, from W.W. Brown Memorial Baptist Church, from our hearts, *is* the Lord’s work!



In closing I note, our young people on both sides of the Atlantic are engaged in the fight for justice and community service. In the U.S. they are involved in civic engagement and protest. In South Africa our young people are supporting BLM in ways that they can from the Continent. They are also actively working to mitigate the ravages of the COVID-19 pandemic by hosting soup kitchens, and educating people about prevention. They are organizing and advocating for an end to gender violence against women and transgendered persons. They are planning a workshop

on community solidarity, teaching self-sufficiency, teaching agriculture, discussing self-defense, and supporting Black owned businesses. Our young people have embraced the truth that our struggle for justice, and for healthy and fulfilling lives is a global struggle and that together are people of faith and as Africans, we are stronger. I applaud them, and I pray for them. They are collaborating and trying to empower each other. Our future is in their hands





## Sanitize – your hands, your space and your spirit.

**How young adults in Soweto are educating their communities on combating Covid19 - scientifically and spiritually.**

“We are fighting a battle against an enemy that we can’t see.” These are the sentiments that have been shared by many as they express their personal struggles with the viral infection, COVID19. South Africa has witnessed the highest number of infections of Covid19 in Africa, with more than half a million infections recorded by the end of July 2020. This number is anticipated to rise further and reach its peak, as the country transitions in season, moving from winter to spring by the end of September. While the national recovery rate stands at 72% and the fatality rate at 2%, citizens remain concerned about being exposed to the virus – particularly those in the Gauteng province. The province currently hosts the highest number of infections affecting the country.



Gauteng is also home to, W.W. Brown Memorial Mission Baptist Church, friends and counterparts of the Global Ministries of Allen Temple Baptist Church. Despite a slight amendment to national lock down regulations, which allow places of worship to host a service with no more than 50 worshippers, the church is scheduled to resume services at the end of September. This decision has been taken by the leadership of the church, as a safety measure for the health of its congregants. Despite social distancing, some former youth and young adult members of the church have found new means and avenues of extending their impact and support to congregants and community members in improving their knowledge of the virus.

Through active community awareness and information sharing sessions, Given Louw Mahlangu, has displayed how bible-based principles can be incorporated into one’s business interests. Given, a former youth member of W.W. Brown has grown to become a family man, community leader and budding entrepreneur with business interest in a wide variety of sectors. Through his company, Madlelila Projects, the entity provides decontamination, cleansing and disinfection services to residential, office and industrial properties. This effort is critical in halting the spread of Covid19 in spaces that are frequented by community members.

Together with the collaborative efforts of his church sisters from W.W. Brown, Given, has extended this commercial offering to also include a complimentary educational and awareness seminar. These sessions are focused on empowering community members on lowering the infection rate and spread of Covid19. The information shared emphasizes the importance of good personal hygiene, but also encouraging

participants to remain faithful in Christ even during uncertain times like these.

While we battle this global pandemic, it has become vital that followers of Christ return to some of the fundamentals of faith-based living. To, love thy neighbor as you love yourself, in prioritizing the safety of all of those around you, to practice patience and kindness with each other and to exercise faith and not be moved by the spirit of fear.

The world, as we know it today, is faced with so many uncertainties - impacting both our physical and spiritual presence. In facing this virus and fighting Satan, we are facing an enemy that we cannot see.

It is through these community relief efforts that the youth and young adults of Allen Temple Baptist Church Global Ministries can exchange and share views on how to address global challenges at a local level.

*\* Written in Johannesburg by Gugulethu Mfuphi, on behalf of Given Louw Mahlangu, Banele Buqwana and Nombuso Macheke, all of whom are members of the Young Adult Cohort of Global Ministries.*