

PRIORITIES

What is the work God has sent us to do, and how important do we consider it to be? Do we think it is more important than our dinner? In *John 4:27-42*, we read of Jesus' encounter with the Samaritan woman which directs a radical challenge to our prejudices.

Here, Jesus is relating to the woman at the well without regard for the customs of the Jews. By their standards it was very unconventional for him to be speaking to a woman alone in such a familiar way, and the disciples noticed this on their return. After this incident, the woman goes into the town and says to the people in *verse 29*; "*Come and see a man who told me everything I have ever done*".

At the well, Jesus sees a woman who needs the salvation he is destined to bring. Jesus dealt with her shameful past in a way that brings no condemnation, but instead, brings life.

At this time, the disciples say in *verse 31*; "*Rabbi, eat something*". Jesus was not interested in food. That was not his priority. In *verse 35*, Jesus challenges the disciples saying that the fields for harvest are right under their noses. The challenge being, the salvation of the Samaritans.

It is among these unlikely people that we see the first group movement to faith in John's gospel. In *verse 42* Jesus trusted his true identity to the woman at the well and the villagers recognised 'the Saviour of the world'. God's purpose of saving the world is seen first in Jesus' mission to the very people for whom his own natural ethnic group had the greatest hostility.

Where does God want us to work? And are we prepared to put our dinner on hold to tell others of God's saving grace?

In Angola where there are 1,500 MU members, Literacy and Development programs are helping to provide life-giving support to many families. These members help relieve the suffering caused by civil wars which have lasted for long periods.

Although it has been 7 years since the end of the last war, poverty and land-mine explosions have taken their toll on the population and half of Angola's children are suffering from malnutrition - 25% of them die before they reach the age of 5.

To make matters worse, Angola's great wealth from diamond mining and oil wells has sadly been given to a few, while the majority of the population lives in abject poverty. None the less, MU continues to work in these difficult conditions, bringing the focus onto female leadership.

The cause of many problems in the country is illiteracy. Many women cannot perform their responsibilities, and living skills are overlooked. MU members are working hard to address literacy and development problems by reaching out to their communities.

Ethiopia is a country with more than 80 ethnic groups and as many languages. Many Anglican congregations are based in the Gambelle region which borders the Sudan. MU was formed there in 2004 with 100 members. Now there are 700 members and they meet regularly for prayer, fellowship, and to discuss family issues.

Members are also active in outreach activities including visiting prisons and hospitals and support for young mothers.

The Lord Jesus chose the Samaritan woman as his priority over his time to eat. His main concern was to be saviour to the woman at the well - the task for which God had chosen him.

God has called us also to prioritise and forego some personal indulgence when someone needs our attention.