

NEWS

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A HUMBLE CALL TO MISSION BRINGS FREE DENTAL SERVICES TO UNDERSERVED IN ZIMBABWE

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The General Board of Higher Education and Ministry (GBHEM) works to build capacity for United Methodist leaders to discover, claim and flourish in Christ's calling in their lives. God's impact on a person's path toward their call isn't always clear in the beginning. Syreeta McTavous-Mosley never set out to be a missionary, and she'll be the first to tell you that. But, as she humbly followed her passion for dentistry and helping people in need, she found herself halfway around the world providing much needed dental services to the underserved.

Trained as a dentist, Syreeta worked in a variety of settings over the last seven years, including a clinic in Rockdale County, Georgia where she would provide free services to patients in need. "I get more fulfillment when I work in clinical settings for people who really need the services, but can't afford to pay for them," she shared.

Having moved to Florida earlier this year, Syreeta was ready to get back to doing what she loved. In October, Syreeta accompanied her husband on a trip to Zimbabwe where he was attending a biannual meeting of the Africa University (AU) Board of Directors.

Syreeta's husband, Albert Mosley, Ph.D., currently serves as executive vice president/chief operating officer at Bethune-Cookman University, a United Methodist-related institution and one supported by the Black College Fund. Mosley was previously the president of the United Methodist-related Gammon Theological Seminary in Atlanta. He currently serves as the vice president of the University Senate, an elected body of higher education professionals coordinated by GBHEM, and was elected to the Africa University board of directors by GBHEM.

As part of her husband's planned trip, Syreeta saw this as an opportunity to use her talents, give back and provide dental services to those in need. "I heard there was a mission right around the corner from Africa University and I thought this was something I could do while my husband was in board meetings. I immediately put in the application so that I could do dentistry there."

The mission includes several homes, a children's boarding school, a hospital and a dental clinic. The dental clinic is fully equipped with nice equipment but has only one functional chair. Syreeta had everything she needed to help the patients and reported serving about 30 children, adults and elderly residents over the course of two days. "Once the word got out that I was providing free dental services, a lot of patients came in. I did a lot of extractions, cleanings and composites, or fillings. It had been quite some time since many of the patients had seen a dentist. It was very much needed."

When asked if she believed there would be an opportunity for her to return to the mission in Zimbabwe, Syreeta was excited to share that she plans to come back at least twice a year when Africa University has their board meetings. In the future, she would like to set up quarterly visits. Her U.S.-based colleagues have shown an interest in helping so that quarterly trips can become a reality.

"When we're able to come more, there is talk of hygienists and even physicians coming to expand this work as far and wide as we can." Syreeta looks forward to learning more about the community and seeing what opportunities are possible down the road.

"This was the first time I'd done mission work like this. I didn't think much of it, other than I was going to help some people. It's just something I wanted to do," said Syreeta. "I definitely saw God's hand in this opportunity."

Syreeta shared that thinking about others in your everyday life is an easy thing we can all work on. "I hope that others would want to do good things. A lot of times it's not about the money or recognition, it's just doing what God wants us to do for one another. It's important to do things to give back to your community and other communities in need with an open heart. It can be anything, it can be something small or big."

Syreeta and her husband called the Snellville United Methodist Church in Georgia home before moving to Florida where they are visiting local churches in search of their next church home.

Many people are doing great things and making a difference in the church and around the world—we call these people difference makers. GBHEM aims to nurture the culture of call in The United Methodist Church by providing connections, programs, initiatives and resources to help individuals identify and support their calling.

For more information about GBHEM, please visit www.gbhem.org.

About GBHEM: *As the leadership development agency of The United Methodist Church, the General Board of Higher Education and Ministry's mission is to build capacity for United Methodist lay and clergy leaders to discover, claim and flourish in Christ's calling in their lives, by creating connections and providing resources to aid in recruitment, education, professional development and spiritual formation. Every elder, deacon and licensed local pastor benefits from our training and candidacy programs. Many young adults find help in clarifying their vocation and God's call in their lives through our leadership and discernment programs. Follow us on Twitter and Facebook.*

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