

### *Passion Keeps Me Here*

“More than a Mile Deep-South Africa (MMD-SA) consists of people who love this ministry,” shared Pillar, a member of their board. Jack echoed the sentiment, “Passion keeps me here. We are not doing things for people, but with people. We are empowering indigenous churches to understand the Bible and God’s expectations for them. We must be patient with people, where they are coming from and their backgrounds.” Pillar illustrated further. “In rural areas there are disadvantaged people, but most are not there by choice. If you get out and have access to some opportunities, why can’t you go back, help them plow the ground, sow seeds, and start to make improvements?” Jack added, “When we present the concepts for the first time, we hear: I can’t write, I can’t speak English, I don’t have money. But we can’t let people give up because of these surface reasons. Once they see how it empowers them, they realize it is so important.”

Lizy is one MMD-SA student who lives out these ideas. She is a widow and is studying the *Pastoral Guidance and Counseling in HIV and AIDS* course. She



lives in one of the townships built outside the cities under the rule of Apartheid, along with 20 children that she cares for between the ages of one and fourteen. Some are orphans; others are from poor families who cannot care for them. Her only biological child, a daughter, passed away so she is also raising her one-year-old granddaughter. Lizy does not have much herself, other than lots of love.

“I’ve gained a lot from the training. I am an introvert but I’ve learned to counsel people who are sick. I’ve been studying with the MMD group for two years. I didn’t know what the word of God said about how to treat those who are sick. MMD has helped in my relationship with the children, especially in caring for one of the boys who is HIV positive. The church helps me. People give what they can: a candle, some matches, a bag of rice, and God enables us to get by. Many HIV positive people are suffering and abused. Sometimes I feel like I am a burden to the church; many of them don’t have much either.” A church leader quickly adds, “We are happy to see God’s children being helped.”

**“900 people die per day in South Africa from HIV/AIDS related illnesses; 200 of them are children.”**

*-from a South African radio report, October 10, 2008*