

**August 14, 2007**

**Where do we fit?**

I feel like we're job searching lately. Not that we plan to go anywhere, but we've opened a whole can of worms with this plan of digging deeper into the needs and resources around here. Suddenly it seems like everybody and their brother in the white community has a "project" that helps this or that group of black people. Several, which I'll detail below, are pretty exciting. But where do we fit in?

The irony of it is that we're here searching for jobs we can do, mostly on behalf of the thousands of others around us that don't have jobs. I just learned that unemployment in this mostly rural area is about 90%, and half of those who are working have to commute or live away from home in order to have that work. The one question I hear from everyone I talk to is, "Do you know anyone who I could work for?" They say they would do just about any sort of work, as long as it pays. And here we are with the strangely privileged opposite dilemma: we have no need for pay, but we want to do only what will really matter.

Not that everything has to be only what really matters. I won't discount the fact that merely being here has a ripple effect. My prayer life is phenomenal lately—the more I live here, the more I see prayer as our best, and often only, response. And there's the little things that can surprise us by making big differences—the friends back in the developed world challenged to see their world differently, the staff we've invested in here, the encouragement we can be among foreigner friends here, and the difference these years will make in our children's lives.

But still, there comes a point where we want to stand up and do something! Like I wrote in the last entry, the micro loans seem like a tiny drop in what needs doing. This learning and listening phase we began just over a week ago has been graciously blessed—enough that we get out of bed with some fresh hope each morning.

I met a white pastor with experience in inter-racial church and an excellent network of charity-workers. Adam had some in-depth conversation with our own Zulu pastor brainstorming community needs and possible solutions. One morning I shadowed a woman designing easy sewing projects for rural women. And Adam visited a camp near us that is starting a project to motivate top students from rural areas to achieve their dreams. I met with a young woman leading a theater troupe of 10 disadvantaged youth interested in financial training for managing their unique business. (They're a fascinating and talented bunch writing and producing dramas about their lives as disadvantaged South Africans. I can't wait to see one!) Oh, and I also met a woman who plans to home-school her four and seven year-olds next year, and Adam met a group of men who meet twice a month at 6 a.m. to pray together.

So over the next few months we trust it will become clearer where we fit among all this.

P.S. Correction from the last entry: I realized I accidentally typed that I might be doing distance seminary classes. At this point it's *Adam* doing the classes, not me.