

CROSSING CULTURES

By Kelvin Mtotha

Kelvin served as a Children and Young People's Worker at St Michael's for a year until August 2007



It was last year in February (2006) when I was working as a volunteer in Invest inc. and Ministry of Hope that my boss asked me and said, "Kelvin, can you go to the gap year in the U.K after finishing your university degree?" I said yes, and then he told me about Careforce U.K, website which I went to surf. After seeing that it is very good I applied and by God's grace I was accepted by Careforce and also St. Michael's church.

My life at St. Michael's Church has been very good and also amazing though when I sum it up I always find that the proper word to use is *super* because I have learnt a lot of things especially in youth work and I have also put in practice the things that I learnt in College, since practice makes perfect. I will take the things that I have learnt here at

St. Michaels to Africa like involving the children when you are teaching and also having activities during the lesson which makes the children's concentration not to go away from the class.

I have a lot of highs and also low during my time here at St. Michael's; one of the things that made my life to be high is youth meetings like the youth Bible study on every other Tuesday evening, the Sneakers group on every other Thursday evening and Threads every Sunday evening. The lowest point in my life was when I damaged my ligaments and cartilage during a football match which has forced me to retire at an early age when I was also at my peak. The time when I damaged my leg was very bad time for me but through God's strength and also the love and encouraging words of the people in the Church I felt good again.

I can't say that I brought anything from my lovely African continent except my time which I dedicated to the work of God which has also helped me to grow spiritually. I feel that I gained from the experience far more than I gave.

It is indeed important for people to live and work in other cultures in the sense that you learn the things which you never knew are there. I will give an example that before I came here I thought people in Britain are not open and they do not care for others but what I have seen is the opposite from what I thought at first. It is the same with the way people think of my lovely continent of Africa. People who have not been to Africa think that it is still a dark continent and people are not civilized but when you go there you will see that a lot of people are very civilized but because people love to take pictures of only poor kids or poor people that is why they think that it is all the same with every person from my lovely Africa. So it is only when you have gone lived and worked in another culture that you learn a lot. One of my friends once told me that "there's no learning without estrangement." So it is important to go and work in another culture if you want to know a lot of things. Remember that "it takes a king to know a king."

My sweet African home is indeed calling me, and I have answered positively to that call and when I go back home I will do some teaching for some months to help the African continent reach a good level of learning and after that I will go to South Africa for my Masters Degree in theology or I will go to a flying School, but it is only God who holds my future and it is His will for me to do these things I will do but if it is not His will He will give me something to do, so I am only looking up to God for guidance. *Shalom!*

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