Generosity in a Time of COVID

Mike Fast 23 July 2020



I'm confident that if you are married, or have spoken to any married person, they will be sure to tell you that at some point or another they have thought to themselves, 'We had no idea what we were signing up for with this partnership.'

About 3 months into my marriage, my wife, Marie-Eve, asked me, 'As tu pris ta douche?' I looked at her puzzled and asked her to repeat herself, which she graciously did. 'As tu pris ta douche?' she repeated (this time louder and with a fair amount of annoyance in her voice). Confused as to what she was trying to say to me, I asked her again, this time she yelled very clearly, 'As tu pris ta douche?!' At this point, I finally realised that she was speaking French and not our shared first language of English. When I lovingly pointed out the breakdown in communication and her 'accidental' use of French when addressing me, we both had a good laugh!

When I entered into a marriage partnership with my wife, I didn't imagine us facing a scenario like the one above where, quite literally, we were speaking different languages, but God used the communication challenge to help us grow in patience and communication skills.

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Four12 Partners in Rural Communities

Similarly, all types of partnerships have unforeseen challenges that have to be navigated as you

go. When it comes to church partnerships, I've learned that these challenges are on a much larger scale and the handling of these has much greater consequences. I have the privilege of being the regional co-ordinator of our Four12 partnering churches in the rural communities of Cape Town. Our Four12 relationships in this region are quite new, and we have loved coming together to share the gifts God has given us.

Lockdown Shortages

From 26th of March – 30th April, our country went into a total lockdown due to Covid-19 restrictions. This meant that no one was allowed to work outside of their homes or leave their homes for any reason other than essential grocery shopping or medical emergencies. By mid-April, we started hearing reports from some churches in the Cape Town area of families struggling due to food shortages. We had to act fast and ask the churches we partner with the hard question, 'How many families in your church have nothing to eat right now?'

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Great Need

14 churches responded, saying that they had families without food in their congregations, equalling a total of 103 families. This was an intimidating challenge. We had never tried to provide food for 103 families before, never mind that this was amid a nationwide lockdown. We didn't know how we were going to practically purchase such a huge amount of food or acquire the rights to travel and distribute the food, even if we were able to purchase it. The situation in the townships was getting more volatile each day, with many food trucks getting attacked. Yet the need was urgent.

Relief Fund Help

After getting input from the guys on the ground, we decided to purchase grocery vouchers and send them to the pastors via text message. This also allowed the pastors to play an active role in helping their people, many of whom needed physical help to get to the store and use the vouchers. 103 families were able to buy a month's worth of basic groceries. All of this was made possible because of the generosity of our Four12 partners. A number of the families testified how that very morning they had been praying to God as they had no food to eat for supper that night. What a joy to see those prayers answered through Four12 partnering churches!

In the days that followed, we were further able to share supplies, such as thermometers and

sanitizer, with churches, enabling them to follow government regulations and open up again. Thirteen churches were able to open their doors because of the supplies that we were able to give them!

A Four12 Partners Relief Fund has been started to specifically contribute to crisis relief for Four12 partnering churches around the world. If you would like to become part of the incredible journey of giving and serving, please visit our 'Give' page on the Four12 website. We look forward to more testimonies as we prayerfully distribute funds in ways that will effectively provide relief to our brothers and sisters in Christ.