



## A Path Less Travelled

**Adeline Louie**



Reflections on a sharing session by Dr. Joyce Samoutou at Ziling Sister Fellowship, Nov. 27

“For it is by grace you have been saved, through faith – and this is not from yourselves, it is a gift from God.” (Eph. 2:8) Every time I hear or sing the hymn ‘Amazing Grace’, I would never cease to be grateful in praising and giving thanks to my gracious and compassionate Lord for saving a wretch like me. Indeed, I once was lost, a strayed sheep going my own way, lost and held in the dominion of darkness. It was only with the salvation grace and the mighty love of God that I was found by Christ, saved by Christ, and led by my Lord and King into His kingdom of light. Indeed, I once was blind, but now I see, thanks be to His amazing grace for me!

As a Christian, one can never give thanks to the Lord enough for the restoration of our spiritual eyesight. As human beings, we can never fully appreciate and give thanks enough to our Creator Lord for blessing us with healthy eyesight. As city dwellers, we are thankful for the flexibility and ease to go to an eye doctor for treatment when the need arises. During Joyce’s sharing, as I heard about Henri’s and her own faith in responding to God’s call, as I deeply felt their love for the blind and visually impaired in Africa, and in understanding how God has revealed His pleasure in their work for His kingdom, I was incessantly moved to tears. It was a time of encouragement for me to hear that the Samoutous, being faithful disciples of Christ, armed with God’s love, grace and strength, have indeed followed Christ’s footsteps to proclaim freedom for the blind and visually impaired in Gabon, in Congo and in nearby regions, to offer recovery of sight to these suffering ones, and to declare the time of the Lord’s love and favor.

### Following Christ’s Footsteps

“Then He (Jesus) said to them all: Whoever wants to be my disciple must deny themselves and take up their cross daily and follow me.” (Luke 9:23) Living out this Scriptural truth is not easy without an ardent faith in the Lord, and without offering oneself as a living sacrifice and fully embracing the Lord’s call to serve Him. In her sharing, Joyce confessed that she, being the only child in her family, was not taught to boil water or cook rice in her upbringing as all household work was lovingly done for her by her family. However, her heart for Africa, which was planted in her from childhood, did prepare her for the Lord’s calling. In November 2000, she was set to head back to Hong Kong after her two-month internship in a missionary hospital in Gabon. However, in her battling with the Lord, she received a very clear and firm call from the Lord to serve Him in Africa. Denying the conveniences and comforts offered by home and city life, she fully submitted herself to the Lord’s beckoning. The



very day after she decided to serve the Lord in Africa, she met her husband to be, Henri Samoutou.

From 2006 to 2008, the Samoutous were involved in setting up an eye centre project with funds from the Christian Blind Mission in the rainforest of Gabon. After bringing the centre to self-sufficiency and completing the Lord's work for them there, the Samoutous returned to Leeds, UK and started working in a local hospital. Yet, their hearts never left Africa. In 2011, they founded New Sight with a vision of having 'a world where no one is needlessly blind', because 80% of blindness and visual impairment are avoidable. It was in 2012 when the Lord again beckoned the Samoutous to return to Africa to serve Him. Together with their three young children,

Cherissa, Ezra and Karis, the Samoutous left the comfort and security of city life and moved to the northern Republic of Congo to Impfondo, to pioneer its first non-profit eye centre with a surgical practice. This centre is being funded by New Sight Eye Care. With Henri and Joyce as its founders, its vision is to bring hope, light and a transformed life to the blind and visually impaired.



The eye centre is now self-sufficient in its operations. It is indeed a place where God's healing grace, God's love and salvation is manifested. It is a sanctuary where God's mighty power and work change curses to blessings, restoring dignity and confidence, and transforming the lives of those who have once been blind and visually impaired. Now, all those who come for healing are given a new life; a blessed life in the joy, in the grace and in the love of the Lord. Evident joy and trust are seen on the faces of the children receiving eye treatment from Henri. One can almost imagine Jesus, who loves the little children, smiling down upon them from heaven.





**The New Sight Eye Care Team**

In the middle is Gerard, whose life changed from curse to blessing when his sight was restored. Like the many who had been healed by Jesus and had gone around to spread the word about Jesus, Gerard is now travelling with the team to help new patients overcome their fear of surgery.



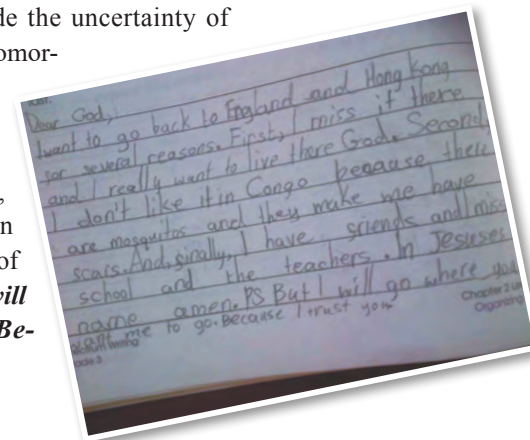
## A Heart for God

In her sharing, Joyce spoke of her doubt at times, of whether it would be in the best interest of her children to live in Impfondo, Congo. Cherissa, Ezra and Karis have to be home schooled, where other extra-curricular activities like music lessons which are accessible to most children seem to be

out of reach. Supermarkets are non-existent, chocolate bars and tasty biscuits are difficult to find. Not easy to get beef or pork, the children have had to make do with the local available meat such as barbecued bat, porcupine, turtle and certain insects. As shown in the photo, ants will simply swarm into the kitchen if utensils are not washed quickly. Living conditions are far from satisfactory. It will take about nine months for the medical supplies to reach the eye centre, around 28 days for their luggage to arrive. Flights are infrequent and seldom on time. Yet, from their family photo, one sees so much joy

and happiness on the faces of the three children! A Scriptural verse written by the apostle Paul comes to mind: "I have learned to be content whatever the circumstances... I can do everything through Christ who gives me strength." (Phil. 4:11; 13) I remember listening to the example of Ezra, the second child, and how he took in stride the uncertainty of whether there would be a flight tomorrow or the day after tomorrow.

I also recall reading a letter written to God by Cherissa, expressing her wish to reside in Hong Kong. Yet, at the bottom of her letter she wrote, ***"P.S. But I will go where you want me to go. Because I trust you."***







The children of Henri and Joyce may not receive the school education comparable to other kids of their years. Yet, from their parents, they have truly received the most precious lesson in life, a lesson some of us adult Christians are still learning, that is, embracing the love for God and the will of God to be our sole delight and utmost desire. Cherissa, Ezra and Karis know what a life with Christ and in Christ is about—a life to love, a life to care for others, a life to share God’s blessings and to have the love of God above all. That is the most precious spiritual legacy we can pass on to our children-- to live an abundant life in Christ, to live a fulfilling life in reaching out to others, and to live life with a mission of spreading the gospel of Christ Jesus our Lord. Certainly, in seeing how the family shares their provisions and blessings with those in need, emphatically working for the Lord’s kingdom, it is clear that the Samoutous are living out this Scriptural truth: “But as for me and my household, we will serve the Lord.” (Joshua 24:15b)

## Future Vision

Many would have taken a rest after finishing the eye care centre project in Impfondo and be satisfied. Not so with the Samoutous! Having denied their own pleasures and comfort, having offered their lives and their all to embrace the call of Christ, Henri and Joyce are now extending their services through the construction and fit-out of a new comprehensive eye hospital in Ouesso by invitation of the local authorities in Congo, on six hectares of land acquired in November 2016. An amount of HK\$37 million has been raised so far out of the total estimated construction cost of HK\$55 million, with HK\$18 million outstanding. This location will indeed reach out to the whole of Congo as well as neighbouring countries such as Cameroon and the Central African Republic. The set-up of the Ouesso Hospital will carry out the mission embraced by the New Sight Eye Care Ministry: to provide comprehensive eye care, empower the local community through training and health promotion, and advocate eye health through partnership.

Not only are Henri and Joyce ardent in preaching the gospel of Christ through the love and work for the much-neglected people in





the Republic of Congo, New Sight Eye Care also strongly agrees with the World Health Organization statement - 'restoring sight is the single most cost effective health intervention to reduce poverty'. Indeed, the vision of the Samoutous declares: "Heal the sick and tell them that the kingdom of God is near you." (Luke 10:9)

The path which Henri, Joyce and their children have taken is indeed a path less travelled. Yet, it is a path filled with the grace and love of God, led by the presence and will of God, and with God's safekeeping and protection along the way. Yes, travelling on the same path are fellow workers, fellow pilgrims and little children with their eyesight being restored, their confidence and dignity returned, and verses of their songs speaking of the love and salvation of Christ.

May the Lord move our hearts to be a fellow pilgrim on this path, stepping out in joy as the light of Christ illuminates our way. We were once blind, but now we see. Hallelujah! Praise the Lord!



Dear Abba Father,

May we ask for Your gracious and abundant provisions for New Sight Eye Care Ministry, as Henri and Joyce and their team have given themselves fully to the work of the Lord, knowing that their labor in the Lord is not in vain. We beseech Jehovah Jireh, the Lord who provides, to meet all the needs of their ministry according to Your glorious riches in Christ Jesus, to make all grace abound to the New Sight Eye Care team and the Samoutou family, so that in all things and at all times, having all that they need, they will abound in their good work of restoring sight, transforming lives and spreading the gospel of Christ Jesus our Lord. May the establishment of the Ouesso Hospital be the Lord's

oasis for the needy in the region of Africa, a planting of the Lord's splendor. May the zeal of the Lord Almighty accomplish this.

Faithful and Almighty God, may You help Henri and Joyce Samoutou, and sustain them to carry their work on to completion until the day of Christ Jesus. We ask for You, gracious Lord, to hold the Samoutou family in the palm of Your loving hand, be with them no matter where they go, watch over them and keep them safe in the shadow of Your wings, for You love them. In the name of our Great Shepherd, Christ Jesus our Lord, we recite this prayer. Amen.

Soli Deo Gloria! 🏰

Photos courtesy of New Sight Eye Care Ministry  
www.newsightcongo.com





## A plead from Aiden Hong

### a P5 boy

Can you imagine being born and not seeing this beautiful world?  
Can you imagine being born and all you see is black?  
And the only colour you know is black?

Sounds awful, right?

I just wanna ask you guys right now how much do you think you can help this wonderful world? How many people can you help? One, ten, maybe twenty? I am Aiden hong and what if I tell you right now that you can help as many people as you'd like? Help people gain sight and see this truly amazing world for the first time?

Have you seen the helpless, blind and hopeless suffering for eyesight just to take a tiny peek of this admirable universe? What if I also tell you that you can make these things happen for these powerless, disabled and helpless people? Doesn't that just sound heavenly?

You can make a difference. Each \$625 you donate to New Sight can help a blind person gain sight. New Sight is a company where they help blind people gain vision, so you already help someone right now! Go to [www.newsightcongo.com](http://www.newsightcongo.com) right now and you can make a positive impact on this incredible and astonishing world just by donating some money. It doesn't have to be a lot, but it will surely benefit the community.

Share this video to as many people as possible and it will truly make a difference. 