

The Schlehlein Family

Missionaries to the Tsongas of South Africa



JULY 2014 | LIMPOPO, SOUTH AFRICA

African Ethical Dilemmas

I changed the names, but all of these events are happening in the homes and churches of Seth and I. How would you answer?

1. Sally commits adultery with the unsaved husband of another church member, Ruth. They are also neighbors. Ruth and I insist Sally moves elsewhere in the village to remove the temptation, but she is a single mom with hardly enough money to eat and has nowhere to go. What should I do?
2. Lawrence is a Zimbabwean pastor who's been herded to a squatter camp with his family and other church members. He lives in a temporary shack and has no means of employment. I counsel him to get out and replant his family, but he doesn't want to leave his flock. What should I do?
3. Our poor church has been meeting in shacks and garages for years. American churches would happily send funds for a building. But Africans are used to handouts and the government buildings in the village are in shambles. What should I do?
4. Kojo gets his girlfriend pregnant, pays damages to her parents (African tradition) and starts living with her as his wife. There have been no vows, wedding, or payment of bride price, but the village essentially sees them as married. Kojo says this will help him to avoid further sin. What should I do?
5. Our neighbor just lost his job at Coke for excessive stealing. As an act of friendship, he greets me one day with an ice cold bottle of carbonated goodness. What should I do?
6. A western church is excited to send a short-term mission team here to build a Sunday School room for the children. The structure would cost about \$5,000--the plane tickets about \$20,000. What should I do?
7. The *xibelana* (Shee-bay-LAH-na) is the most popular Tsonga dance as well as the skirt that the dancers wear. The dress is colorful; Audrey owns one. The skirts are stuffed with material to pronounce the dancer's backside, after which young and old women spend hours shaking it to the glee of the crowd. I am asked to give the gospel at the event. What should I do?
8. Maria's husband is an unbeliever known for infidelity. He refuses to get tested for HIV. Maria wants to make the marriage work but is frightened and wants to know if divorce is biblically valid. What should I do?
9. In Mbhokota, being 30, married and childless is shameful. Being 18, single and the mother of two is not. On Mother's Day at our church, [we clap and give gifts to the moms](#). Most mothers fit the latter category. What should I do?
10. Our neighbor has robbed us repeatedly. The police are corrupt and do nothing. Long ago, some villagers once tied him up and left him shivering through the night. I'm told beating him to a pulp will fix the problem. What should I do?



The Xibelana, in a quieter moment

In pursuit of discernment,
The Schlehlein Seven