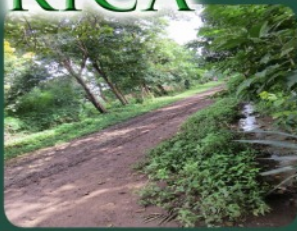


HEART FOR AFRICA



April 2015

Larson Mission Update

A Blessed Partner in the Gospel



"For this reason we also thank God without ceasing, because when you received the word of God which you heard from us, you welcomed it not as the word of men, but as it is in truth, the word of God, which also effectively works in you who believe."

1 Thessalonians 2:13

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Healthy relationships with the nationals are an all-important ingredient in any successful missionary endeavor. If they are built on the foundation of Christ, they last and produce sustainable spiritual fruit. The great temptation and danger in a third-world country is to allow money to creep into the equation, but when that is the basis, it is almost always destined to fail when the money is reduced or stopped.

So what does this mean to ICM-Tanzania? As the Lord moves to expand our ministry throughout the country, we carefully seek out healthy partnerships with pastors in strategic areas. Together we are able to establish new Centers of Excellence from which to conduct our pastoral training program. By reducing the two-day travel time from the outermost regions of the country to Moshi, more pastors are able to access our training. In this context, a Tanzanian region is best compared to a U.S. state, and there are currently 31 regions.

Pastor Silas has been working closely with a special pastor named Selemani in Mwanza, one of the northwestern regions. He is the national-level bishop for his denomination and also from the dominant Sukuma tribe in that region. He is well-respected within both communities. Selemani is also currently enrolled in the Mt Kilimanjaro Pastoral Training Center (MKPTC) program in Moshi, and is one of our most enthusiastic students.

We have made several 13-hour bus trips to his church and are amazed at what he is able to accomplish each time. Last month he brought in almost 100 leaders, including 42 pastors and bishops for us to train in our Level 1 and 2 IBS seminars. When the national bishop tells the people to come, the people respond! The following week we travelled back there to train 20 pastors and overseers in our Level 3 and 4 material. This is the second time Selemani has hosted an arrangement like this with great success.

"Let a man so consider us, as servants of Christ and stewards of the mysteries of God. Moreover it is required in stewards that one be found faithful."

1 Corinthians 4:1-2

What is amazing is that he was hospitalized with malaria on the last day of the Level 2 seminar, and that is where we found him on Monday when we arrived late in the evening after our long bus ride from Moshi. It is not the most comforting thing to see your seminar host in a bed with an IV in his arm and a doctor and nurse attending to him! Knowing what we were thinking, he looked at us

and said, "No problem!" He would be out the following morning in time for the seminar. The doctor and nurse, who also happened to be members of his church, just looked at us and smiled. You often get to see the true character of a person in a trial, and we were so blessed by what we saw and heard from him. He even let us snap a picture the next day.

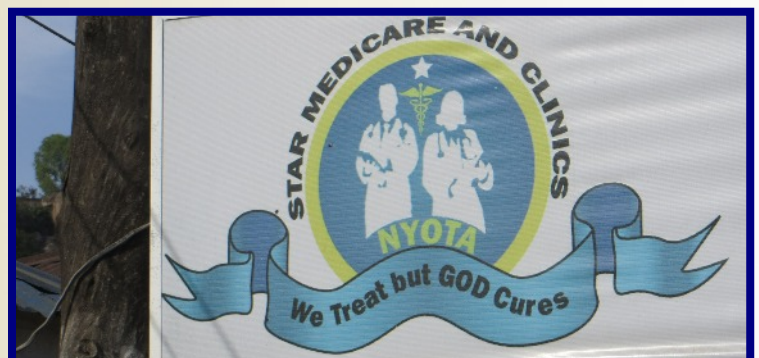
Selemani being treated for malaria in hospital.



"Let the word of Christ dwell in you richly in all wisdom, teaching and admonishing one another in psalms and hymns and spiritual songs, singing with grace in your hearts to the Lord."

Colossians 3:16

The next morning, true to his word, Selemani had us meet him at the clinic so we could walk to his church together. We hiked almost a mile up a hill to reach it. He stopped and visited so many people along the way who were setting up their shops for the day. He was clearly a beloved and respected community leader. Each person mattered to him. Even though he was still weak and tired – he greeted each one with a humble word of encouragement. Not your typical national-level bishop with almost 60 churches under his responsibility!



The first thing we noticed after arriving at Selemani's church is that he had drawn the entire New Testament overview from the MKPTC teaching on a large blackboard...maps, timelines, and everything! He told us he was teaching his church members book by book through the New Testament two nights each week and planned to finish just before he came to Moshi for our next session. We were so blessed to see and hear this. We challenge the students to do just what he was doing, but really have no way to know if they followed through.

"No one should be shaken by these afflictions; for you yourselves know that we are appointed to this."

1 Thessalonians 3:3

Seeing an amazing opportunity, we invited Selemani to teach the New Testament overview as a devotional before one of our seminar days. He graciously agreed. Two mornings later (and two more all-night clinic stays to get rest and IV fluids)

he enthusiastically taught for 90 minutes, giving the other pastors and overseers a panorama view of the entire New Testament. It was a special moment to see the ministry vision transpiring right before us – our students taking the teaching we give them back to their churches and communities. We cannot teach every Tanzanian, but gifted and motivated Tanzanian pastors can help make this a reality.



Selemani with his wife, Naomi, and youngest child (top)

Seminar pastors and workers who attended all 4 days of training (L)

program there. He is perfectly situated to serve as a hub for one-quarter of the regions in the country. He would make all of the arrangements to house and feed the students at a very reasonable cost, and provide us a classroom.

We were touched by his sincere and generous offer. Selemani has become a true friend of ICM-TZ and has never once asked us for anything; he just keeps offering us blessings. We pray this becomes the heart of every ICM-TZ missionary.

"A bishop then must be blameless, the husband of one wife, temperate, sober-minded, of good behavior, hospitable, able to teach; not given to wine, not violent, not greedy for money, but gentle, not quarrelsome, not covetous."

1 Timothy 3:2-3

But the real blessing came when he offered to help us create an IBS Center of Excellence in his church so we could conduct part of our pastoral training center

"And remember the words of the Lord Jesus, that He said, 'It is more blessed to give than to receive.'"
Acts 20:35

Catch up on our personal journey through our website news, and find many more pictures there.

www.thelarsons.webs.com

PICTURE OF THE MONTH



Pray for Andrew and Deborah, the interns who have been with us from Prairie Bible Institute in Canada since November 2014, as they depart Tanzania April 20. They have been a major blessing to us, helping at our church on Sundays and Wednesdays, and going into villages with us to help do family ministry. They are returning to Canada to continue their degree. We pray God's blessing over them!

CONTRIBUTIONS PAYABLE & MAILED TO:

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Note "LARSON" in Memo of check

On-line giving available via PayPal on our website



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PRAYER ITEMS

- Please lift up all our pastors as they teach their people the true meaning of Easter and salvation.
- The MKPTC in Moshi (Class #5, Session 2) April 15-24 (teachers: Silas, Loth & Jim)
- We have finalized the list of students for our first women's training center which begins in June. Please keep these women in your prayers. Janice will also be teaching.
- Pray for the safety of ICM-TZ missionaries and Jim as they travel around the country by bus. Some terrible road accidents recently have claimed the lives of many. We are thankful for God's protection.