

HEART-FOR-AFRICA



February 2015

Larson Mission Update



*"I was glad when they said to me,
"Let us go into the house of the LORD."*

Psalm 122:1

 Successful acculturation—the continuous process of integrating into a foreign culture—requires direct interaction with members of the host culture *on their terms*. Missionary effectiveness and acculturation go hand in hand. It opens doors for new ministry opportunities, establishes the missionary's credibility, helps the missionary contextualize his or her communications for members of the host culture, and makes living in a foreign land less stressful and more rewarding.

With numerous invitations to visit villages and limited time available, we carefully consider each opportunity in light of the ministry goals, as well as our own personal acculturation goals. Genuine interactions aimed at building healthy long-term relationships are hard to come by and are greatly cherished when the Lord presents them.

"I have become all things to all men, that I might by all means save some."

1 Corinthians 9:22b

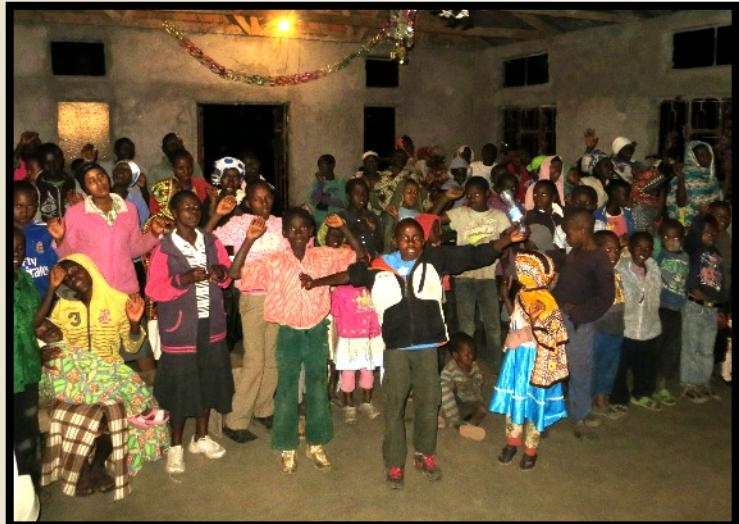
Over time we have sought to establish healthy relationships with the ministers, their families and churches. Each has become special to us and each has intentionally reached out in love and welcomed us as one of their family. So when Pastor Loth and his wife Laitness invited us to experience New Years with them in the Mount Meru area, we did not have to think long before saying yes. This was the first year we were not on furlough over the holidays, so it would be a great educational opportunity to see how the churches here celebrate the New Year. We were recently surprised to see that churches across Tanzania celebrate Christmas Day with a morning church service. Their “special time with family” means the whole family goes to church to spend time with their Christian brothers and sisters.



We were warned in advance that there would be a church service on New Year's Eve and another on New Year's Day morning. When I asked Pastor Loth why, he smiled and said the evening service helps discourage good people from going to wrong places, and the morning service helps encourage people to moderate their celebrations knowing they will be at church the next day. He went on to say that all churches across Tanzania do the same thing. We smiled in return and commended him for the very clever approach to being a light in the darkness.

"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



We arrived at 4:00 in the afternoon and should have realized what was in store when dinner was served by 5:30. Church service started at 6:00 and next thing we knew it was midnight. We sang, taught the Word, watched the Jesus film and sang some more. The church was packed not just with members, but with many other people from the surrounding areas. Pastor Loth is very skilled on the keyboard and Laitness helped lead a number of the songs. What a talented couple who use their special gifts to glorify the Lord in praise and worship. And we continued with more of the worship and the Word on New Year's Day. What an awesome way to ring in the New Year!

What really excited us was the way Pastor Loth taught the Word of God. He is an amazing expository teacher, using the verse-by-verse method of methodically teaching through the Biblical text. We could also see the people really enjoyed this teaching style. Pastor Loth has just embarked on a study of Romans in his church to

"So they read distinctly from the book, in the Law of God; and they gave the sense, and helped them to understand the reading."

Nehemiah 8:8

prepare him to teach Romans at our pastoral training center in March. One of his elders shared how encouraged and excited the church has been to hear Romans taught so clearly and thoroughly. I could see why Pastor Loth has been in great demand outside of Meru to teach Inductive Bible Study and preach the Word, even in the farthest reaches of Tanzania.

He recently shared about an IBS seminar he conducted at one of the “high church” denominations a two-day trip from his home. Over 50 people attended from a number of different denominations. When the senior pastor learned on the seminar’s second day that Pastor Loth had a Pentecostal background, he asked him to stop the seminar and leave. Amazingly, Pastor Loth was implored by a number of the students to relocate the seminar to an elementary school not far away, and all of the people joined him there and finished the seminar under a shade tree in the school’s courtyard while the school was in session!



Pastor Loth regularly spends quiet time in prayer interceding for the people and leaders of Tanzania, and for the nation of Israel, its people and leaders. ICM-TZ has also been in fervent prayer that the Lord would raise up men of God from within its ministers and give them regional and national platforms as God’s humble spokesmen. We see Loth possibly moving into such a role. He told of an incident last month where he led 1,000 men (500 on motorcycles!) to track and reclaim 4

cows that had been stolen from farmers in his village. They started at 10:00 pm and located the cattle at the Kenya border the next morning at 9:00 am. The thieves had fled—most likely because they heard the sound of 500 motorcycles coming their way! Still, we had to ask Loth, “Why such a big effort to rescue 4 cows? The cost of fuel and time was much greater than the cost of 4 cows.” His response was short and simple – “That is how the Merus are. We stick together and help each other out no matter what the cost.” Then his face lit up and he smiled, asking us a question, “Why would God put forth such great effort and incur such a high cost just to save one lost sinner? It’s all about God, not the sinner.”

Now that will preach!

"I say to you that likewise there will be more joy in heaven over one sinner who repents than over ninety-nine just persons who need no repentance."

Luke 15:7



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

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PICTURE OF THE MONTH



We are always amazed by the resourcefulness of people, especially when it comes to their livelihood.

This road is well-travelled by men who carry needed firewood and charcoal into Moshi for the “city dwellers” to use. Their mode of transport is always a bicycle, and the load is stacked significantly higher than the driver. Keeping their balance and not needing to stop for anything is critical to success.

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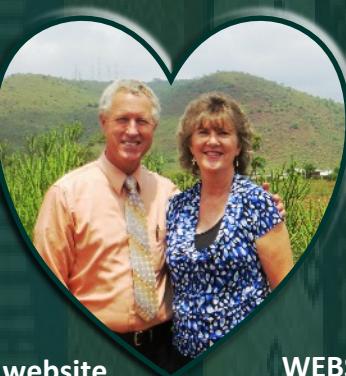
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On-line giving available via PayPal on our website

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PRAYER ITEMS

- We have 3 pastoral training centers going on this quarter which is a huge workload to fund, administer and conduct so please pray for us, the instructors, and the students.
- Lift up the planning and preparation for the inaugural Women’s Training Center which starts in June.
- We are thankful Zipporah delivered a healthy baby boy named “Godsave” via C-section on January 10!
- In addition to all our primary ministry activities, we continue to lead the church, go deeper with the Secondary School students this year, and pursue our seminary education. Pray for our time management and physical and spiritual health.