

HEART FOR AFRICA  
"TRANSFORMING BIBLICAL PREACHING ONE PASTOR AT A TIME"

JANUARY 2024

# Lives Dedicated to Service



*I beseech you therefore, brethren, by the mercies of God, that you present your bodies a living sacrifice, holy, acceptable to God, which is your reasonable service. And do not be conformed to this world, but be transformed by the renewing of your mind, that you may prove what is that good and acceptable and perfect will of God.*

Romans 12:1-2

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Serving God in full-time ministry has so many joyous times, whether you are in your home culture and country or in another. He calls each of us to utilize the gifts He has bestowed upon us to help build His kingdom on earth—to share the Gospel through teaching the Bible, giving our resources generously in support of His work around the world, being able to apply our natural talents (music, administration, engineering, building skills, etc) while sharing God’s love with others, and a myriad of other ways. Each of us has something to contribute. And it’s a wonderful thing when you see God use yours and others’ talents to make a difference in one or more lives. It is what fuels us and keeps us going. But we all know that life is not made up of just the glorious times, and that the challenges of life will surely come to test our physical, emotional, and spiritual strength.

Working in partnership with In Deed and Truth (IDAT) Ministries in South Sudan has been a high point for us the last few years. The environment is very challenging and quick to strip away one’s veneer and reveal things you need to work on. The constant heat drains your physical stamina; the limited availability of a variety of food choices helps you identify with the Israelites wandering in the desert; the only source of electricity being just enough solar to power lights and a fan allows you to adapt to cold showers and give thanks that there is at least water. The conditions ensure you learn to “die to self” and develop total dependence on the Lord to help you persevere to carry out His work. We have a lot of respect for the ones who live and minister there full time.

***“For I say, through the grace given to me,  
to everyone who is among you, not to think of  
himself more highly than he ought to think,  
but to think soberly,  
as God has dealt to each one a measure of faith.”  
Romans 12:3***

On our recent trip this past November, Jim’s co-teacher was not able to go due to health reasons, so Janice went to handle all the administrative duties and Jim would teach all day, from 8:00AM-8:00PM. We knew it would be challenging, but we both felt it could be done. Plus, the new Bible school facility would be finished during our visit and we were to participate in dedicating the building (front cover photo).

One of the really joyous times early on was attending a village church the first Sunday which just meets under a tree. There were at least 200 people there, all who came to hear the Word that Jim had prepared for them. There was music, prayer, teaching, and fellowship which blessed our hearts. People walked for miles to attend.

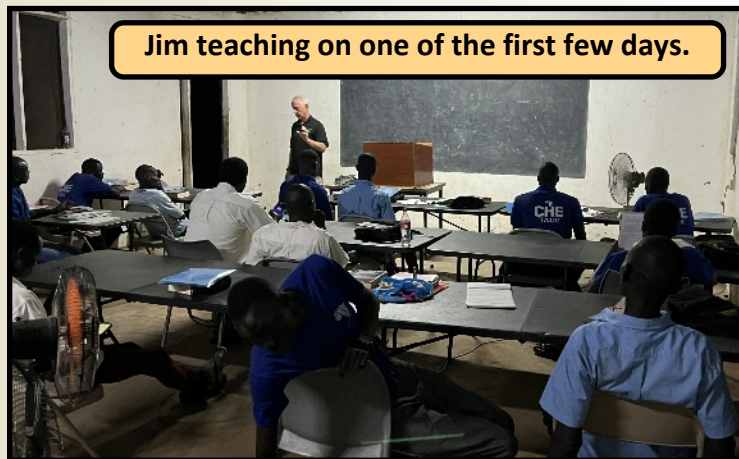
**Janice greeting the village church**



It is refreshing to participate with worship in a pure, basic form. It reminds us of what is important and refocuses our hearts and minds on the fact that Jesus died for all of us—rich or poor, male or female, enslaved or free, regardless of color. It is truly an honor and a humbling experience to be part of what God is doing to equip His church throughout the world.

Jim was teaching the fourth session of the diploma class, and we had 16 pastors who were working hard to grasp some pretty complex theological ideas. Some of them are very young—fresh out of school—and others are mature men who have experienced life but didn’t have much opportunity for education. They all work together well to share their abilities with each other.

**Jim teaching on one of the first few days.**



About the fourth day of the session, Jim began to have a bad backache, which we thought was due to him being on his feet 10-12 hours each day. But by the sixth day, he was brought to his knees in excruciating pain. It appeared he had a kidney stone. IDAT has a maternity and pediatric clinic and hospital on the compound with nurses and physician assistants to staff it, so they began doing what they could for him. They were giving IV fluids and pain medication to try to keep him comfortable, but they had no means to resolve the issue. We discussed doing a medevac for him because we had no idea if the size of the stone was passable, or if there was a total blockage to that





The village gifted us a goat and a chicken, which we took back to the compound with us in the vehicle. They also made us a traditional hat/crown (we're not sure) as a keepsake.



Jim drinking a hot cup of coffee mixed with peanut butter! Yum!!!



Laying hands on the new building during the dedication prayer.



The latrines and shower on the compound.



**Above:** Jim in front of the new school facility.

**Middle:** Jim presiding over communion in church.

**Right:** Greeting children and locals when we went to a local pastor's house and village.

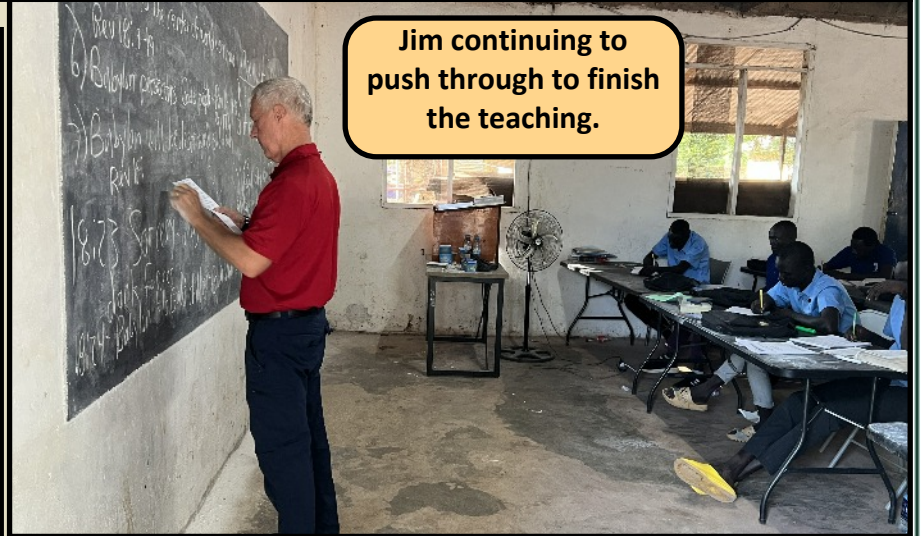




Having lunch with some of the pastors and a visitor from the US  
Right: Praying over a newborn twin in an incubator. Her name was Mercy and she lived less than 24 hours.



This is the mother with the other twin, Grace, and they are both fine.



Jim continuing to push through to finish the teaching.



Above: Jim recovering in Nairobi  
Left: a typical mud house and thatched roof with a small chicken coop. This is the home of the pastor who hosted us for lunch.



**Jim and the class on the last day.**



kidney which could cause permanent damage if left untreated for too long. But in the end, Jim felt that if they could keep his pain to a tolerable level, he wanted to push forward and try to finish the class. The idea of sending the students away and not having any idea when we would be able to return to finish, and the additional cost, and a host of other issues factored into the decision.

It reminded us a lot of Paul's "thorn in the flesh," and him having begged the Lord multiple times to remove it. Jim felt much the same way, but He also realized that if the Lord had called him to this work, He would help him see it through to completion. The students prayed for him, Janice did a lot of the board work so he didn't have to stand on his feet so much, the medical staff tended to him at all hours of the day and night, and the Lord strengthened him to be able to continue hour by hour, day by day.

*"4 For as we have many members in one body, but all the members do not have the same function, 5 so we, being many, are one body in Christ, and individually members of one another. 6 Having then gifts differing according to the grace that is given to us, let us use them..."*  
**Romans 12:4-6a**

**The church has well over 1,000 members!**



By God's grace he was able to finish on Sunday afternoon, as well as preach at the main church service that morning and participate in the new Bible school building dedication. It was another high to cap off a time of service that had just as many lows. At times you think you just can't do one more thing—you're tapped out physically, emotionally, and spiritually—but then you look beyond yourself to the people the Lord has placed beside you and realize you're not doing any of it alone. Oftentimes, the other saints are just as challenged by life as you are, but together—with the Lord's help—you can move forward.

We returned to Tanzania safely and were able to determine that he had not one, but two kidney stones that were too large to pass on their own. We traveled to Nairobi a few days later and placed Jim in the care of a surgeon/urologist who had the latest advanced equipment and was able to provide top-notch care. He was astonished that he had been able to persevere and endure the hardships those stones caused, which was an opportunity to give God all the glory.

**The IDAT missionary, Suzy, with us and many of the current students in the new classroom.**



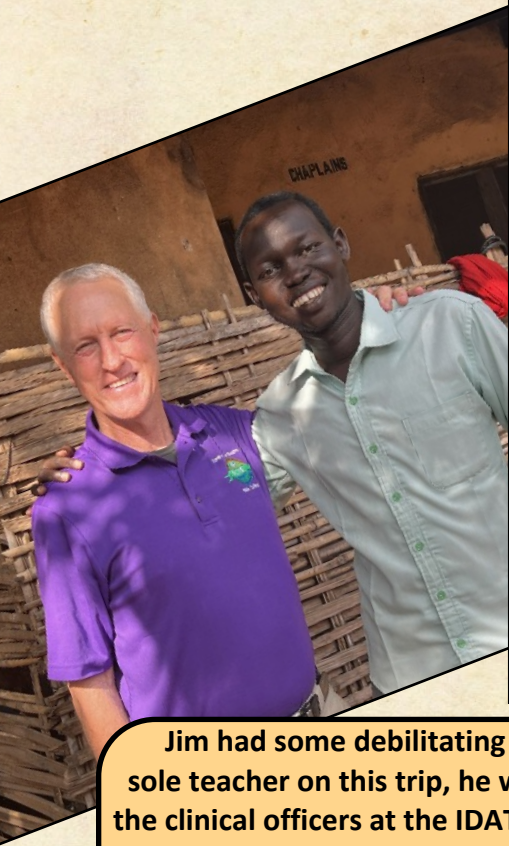
Have we mentioned lately what an amazing work God is doing in Africa, and how much we could all benefit from others who have the gift of teaching, administration, and leadership to join us here? It takes time to disciple the local pastors for them to be ready to stand firmly on their own, and now that we're in Tanzania, Kenya, South Sudan, and Liberia—with new interest from Rwanda and Malawi—we are overwhelmed at the thought of continuing to do this alone. We are all praying fervently for the Lord to move in the hearts of gifted men who desire to commit their lives to equipping others and experience the Church in a most fulfilling way. Would you please join us in that prayer.

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

[www.jimandjanicelarson.com](http://www.jimandjanicelarson.com)



# Pictures of the Month



Jim had some debilitating medical challenges that arose during this session. Given that he was the sole teacher on this trip, he was determined not to have to cancel and reschedule, so he prevailed upon the clinical officers at the IDAT compound to help him keep going. They gave him a daily infusion of fluids and medication. We're very grateful to Marko (left) and Joseph (right) for helping him fulfill his calling. We then traveled to Nairobi when the session was over and got the treatment Jim needed, but the IDAT ministry and their staff were key to helping us make good decisions along the way. It's a team effort!

## CONTRIBUTIONS PAYABLE & MAILED TO:

Intensive Care Ministries  
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Note "LARSON" in Memo of check

On-line giving available through our website



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## PRAYER REQUESTS

- Praise for the Lord helping Jim get the medical care he needed while in South Sudan, and afterwards in Nairobi. He is still recovering, so please pray for complete healing during our furlough.
- Pray for our time of furlough—for rest, quality family time, and yet Divine appointments to aid us in God's work. This month we will be traveling January 14-25 to other locations.
- Continue to pray for the Lord to call men of God to come alongside us to work in the ministry, as well as helping with the church here. We need a lead pastor, as well as teachers/administrators for the Bible colleges. We continue to get requests from other African nations, but we cannot respond.
- Pray for the ICM-Africa staff and our church while we are away.