

HEART FOR AFRICA
"TRANSFORMING BIBLICAL PREACHING ONE PASTOR AT A TIME"
MARCH 2019

"Personal Matters"



"Your eyes saw my substance, being yet unformed. And in Your book they all were written, the days fashioned for me, when as yet there were none of them."

Psalm 139:16

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Each person matters to God. He is longsuffering, saving one person at a time. He knows our name and every detail about us, even numbering the hairs on our head (Matthew 10:30)! He is patient, not wishing for any to perish but for all to come to repentance (2 Peter 3:9). And of course, Luke reminds us of the importance of every single person when he addressed his Gospel and the book of Acts to a man named Theophilus. God used Luke to write 25 percent of the entire New Testament addressed to one person! Each person matters to God.

“For God so loved that world that He gave his only begotten Son, that whoever believes in Him should not perish but have everlasting life.”

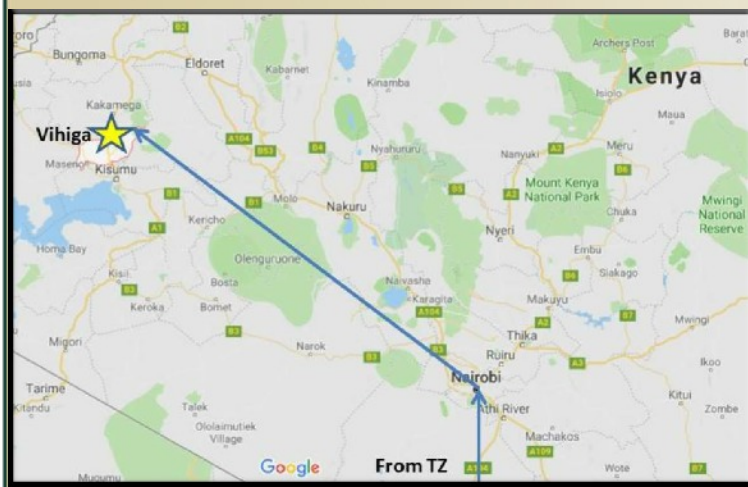
John 3:16

Jesus would often minister to one person during His time on earth. The Creator and Sustainer of all things took time out of His busy day to minister to that one person who needed Him right then. Even as the Lord neared death on the cross, He ignored His own pain and suffering to heal the spiritual pain and suffering of the thief crucified next to Him. Indeed, each person matters to the Lord. As we approach our 8th year working among and with God's precious people in Tanzania, the Lord continues to emphasize to us what is important to Him through the stories of our ministry.

“Whoever drinks of the water that I shall give him will never thirst. But the water that I shall give him will become in him a fountain of water springing up into everlasting life.”

John 4:14

This story took place in Kenya in the context of the new work we are carefully starting there. Through the cross-border ministry of some of our Tanzanian ministers, as well as Kenyan Pastor Ezekiel, we are conducting Inductive Bible Study seminars around the country. Our goal is to teach Kenyan pastors how to study the Bible systematically and to preach the Word effectively in their own churches.



Early this year we were invited to west Kenya to conduct a preaching seminar to almost 30 pastors. We were excited to have this many pastors as we usually expect 15-20. A long day's journey from Nairobi had us arriving in a remote area after dark, not far from our seminar location. After a good night's rest, we went through our normal morning routine; then arrived at the host church by 8:30. Seven pastors were already there, including the host. Another 30 minutes and we had 15 pastors. Excellent!



The host church

We decided to take a short walk around the village; we like to meet the neighbors and spend time getting to know them. Pastor Silas led the way, while Ezekiel remained behind at the church to receive new arrivals. Soon we found ourselves walking through a well-kept field of local variety vegetables. It did not take long for the owner to step outside to greet us. There are few white-skinned visitors in this very remote area.

“Being confident of this very thing, that He who has begun a good work in you will complete it until the day of Jesus Christ.”

Philippians 1:6

The man introduced himself as Reverend Arthur and said his church was not far away. After exchanging pleasantries, he invited us in to join a prayer meeting he was conducting in his home. We accepted – what better way to get to know folks than to pray with them. Inside Arthur's study there were five people gathered for prayer. Once we started, each person shared their prayer needs and we prayed for them, including prayers for their village (Ebunangwe), county (Vihiga), and nation. When we got to Reverend Arthur, he had one prayer request: for his oldest son, Daniel, who was not saved nor living a good life. Arthur shared that his wife, Beatrice, had passed away in January 2017; her dying wish was for her son to be saved. We had seen Beatrice's headstone earlier as we walked up to the house. She had succumbed after a long battle with cancer. We could tell Arthur missed Beatrice, and that Daniel's salvation was his heartfelt desire also.

Then, by God's providence, Daniel walked by the room after coming in from tending to the field. Without hesitation Silas invited him in, soiled work clothes and all. Daniel appeared embarrassed in front of guests. Silas spent over 2 hours talking and sharing the Gospel with Daniel. Like a skilled surgeon, Silas went back and forth with carefully reasoned arguments, engaging Daniel with the crucial aspects of salvation. It was fascinating to watch as the Lord opened Daniel's heart to receive the truths of His Gospel. By the time Silas prayed with Daniel to receive a new life in Christ, it was 11:30--2 hours past our seminar start time! We felt blessed, but we knew there might be a sharp scolding in our near future.



Standing (L-R): Rev. Arthur, then his prayer warrior ladies, then Daniel and Silas (on front cover), and another prayer team member.

Truly, each person is important to God! Thirty pastors had to wait for us, but a lost sheep had been found and welcomed into the kingdom of God. We were pleasantly surprised to see Ezekiel had taken charge and began teach the seminar in our absence. The Lord always provides!



Pastor Ezekiel teaching



Many pastors/leaders from one denomination



Pastor Silas leading the group.



Jim's birthday celebration dinner with friends from our church.

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

www.jimandjanicelarson.com

Pictures of the Month



Pastor Ezekiel's family, and his wife's, are from the Vihiga area. They started a Christian primary school there a year ago, and we were able to do some songs with them. There is no electricity nor books, but the teachers are committed to helping these kids learn by whatever means they can. The upper right photo shows the 2 mud/stick classroom buildings, and the small metal outhouse. Please pray for this effort to educate the youngest and most vulnerable of the population.

CONTRIBUTIONS PAYABLE & MAILED TO:

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On-line giving available through our website



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PRAYER REQUESTS

- February was so busy, and there is much to be thankful for. Several Bible college classes, a graduation, men's and women's seminars, teacher training, discipleship classes in schools, and much more. Praise God from whom all blessings flow!
- Thankful that Janice's father and sister had a successful move from Oklahoma to NW Florida in order to be closer to our children. There was a small incident during the move that could have been disastrous, but the Lord's hand of protection was on them, and we are very grateful for His faithfulness.
- We have two more graduations on March 8th and 22nd, the latter being our final all-women's class.
- Pray for a solution to our lack of electricity at the Meru Bible College campus. Too expensive to have the power company bring it, so we're trying to raise funds for a solar-powered system. The students need lights at night to be able to study and do homework. Also praying for funds to cover the project materials.