

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

JUNE 2023

GOD
IS
LOVE

1 John 4:16 ESV

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Built on Love!

“And we have known and believed the love that God has for us. God is love, and he who abides in love abides in God, and God in him.” 1 John 4:16

God is love. We have heard these profound words so many times that we tend to take their meaning for granted or even misinterpret them. Love is a core aspect of God’s character—His person. Genuine love is perfectly expressed by God because He is the source of love. Remember, all of God’s attributes are in perfect harmony with each other. His love is not in conflict with His holiness, righteousness, justice, or even His wrath. No matter what God does, or allows, or speaks in His Word...everything is done in love.

Four years ago, the members of the ICM-Africa family made a life-altering and ministry-transforming decision to become more intentional and focused toward living out our response to God’s love for us. Though we have a number of important secondary goals, we felt compelled to make the primary goal of all our teaching to be to deepen each student’s relationship with Jesus Christ. That relationship is to be built on heartfelt love; a genuine love for Jesus that compels a genuine love for others—even from different denominations and tribes.



Paul certainly captured the spirit behind this approach in 2 Corinthians 5:14 when he stated: *“The love of Christ compels me!”* Our heartfelt desire was to be known as a ministry that loves in the same way that God loved us: sacrificially and unconditionally. Love for others is not about them, what they can *do* for us, or have done *to* us.

“My little children, let us not love in word or in tongue, but in deed and in truth.”

1 John 3:18

Love is about *my* decision to love them because God’s love is in me. When we reflect His love, we reflect Him.



We resolved to ensure this ministry approach was not just a bunch of words and little action by reviewing and updating more than 500 pages of ministry documents which our instructors use when teaching in our various programs. Every teaching point, every practical exercise, and every devotional have all been oriented explicitly toward that goal. Now we had to not only teach *“The love of Christ compels me!”* we had to live that reality out before our students. Our hope is that it would become an ingrained habit in our people as well as a lived-out reality our students would find worthwhile to emulate in the context of their own churches and families. We wanted people to view ICM-Africa as a ministry built on love.

***“Unless the LORD builds the house,
They labor in vain who build it.”***

Psalm 127:1a

One of the first things we realized was that love took a number of vastly different forms. In the occasional instance where one of our team members stumbles, we have a choice to make, and it’s *not* whether we should discipline them! David looked the other way when one of his children erred, and it led to significant problems in his family later. Failing to discipline is failing to love! For our disciplinary team, the primary decision involves what form the discipline will take. What form best achieves the goals of correction, restoration, restitution, and

prevention while affirming our love for the erring individual, as well as those affected by the error.

“Therefore whoever hears these sayings of Mine, and does them, I will liken him to a wise man who built his house on the rock.”
Matthew 7:24



Probably one of the most challenging areas for our team involves money concerns. Money can go a long way in Tanzania, but there is also a never-ending need for it. We “fix” one area and ten more crop up behind it! Whether it is paying school fees for the children of our team members, helping expand their church buildings, or helping them finish building their house, we must always proceed with caution. We love each one of our team members, but the Lord has called us into the work of making Christ-following disciples, not money-dependent disciples. Time and again we have learned that when we “lead” with money in a relationship, everything from that

point seems to be driven by that aspect of the relationship. The Lord continues to impress upon us to focus solely on building on Love.

Love, care, and concern for our team members are also shown in how we respond to tragedy in their lives. Death seems to have touched us on every side—from the worker who passed away while helping build one of our campuses, to the two instructors we lost due to illness in the past year. Each left behind a widow and young children. We cannot hesitate when that happens, but we must also ensure our response is prayerfully considered. We never want to rob others of the blessing of contributing by stepping in and funding everything ourselves, even though we could. Instead, we prefer to join in with others and do our part as a “socially responsible” ministry. Sometimes, that means covering a deficit after everyone else—family, church, and friends—have all played their part. ICM-Africa is truly the ministry that Love built and on Love it is built!



Left Page: The ICM-A team at a leadership meeting.
Left Page: Jim sharing some love with kids in Kenya
Upper Left: The women’s team loves to get together
Bottom left: The team showed their love for Pastor Fredy at his funeral last month.
Above: The team singing praises to God while climbing Mt. Meru together.

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

www.jimandjanicelarson.com

Picture of the Month



Another "home assignment" is finished. Meeting with some of the ICM board members (above) and 2 church presentations (right).

CONTRIBUTIONS PAYABLE & MAILED TO:

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Note "LARSON" in Memo of check

On-line giving available through our website



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PRAYER REQUESTS

- Continue to pray for Jim while he ministers without Janice this month, as she returns at the very end of June.
- Pray for Janice as she finalizes some medical care for herself this month, as well as wraps up some ministry work she has been doing while in the US.
- Praise for a productive and fruitful meeting last month with the ICM Board. We are blessed to be part of such a supportive ministry team.
- There are 4 graduations in 4 weeks this month, so keep all the students, instructors, and leaders in prayer as they bring these classes to a close. It's been a long road for everyone!
- Pray as we begin the college ministry again; that we might be a light to this next generation.