

HEART FOR AFRICA
"TRANSFORMING BIBLICAL PREACHING ONE PASTOR AT A TIME"
JANUARY 2020



*"Unless the Lord builds the house,
they labor in vain who build it."*

Psalm 127:1a

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Planting the next generation!

Church Planting

The Lord has built this ministry on a steady, methodical path in a way we could never have imagined. Metaphorical brick by brick, the Lord has established a work that is culturally relevant and responsive to the spiritual development needs of God's people here. By listening carefully to Tanzanian pastors, we are able to understand their needs, then seek the Lord's guidance in prayer on how to proceed.

We have often observed western-style church buildings or ministry approaches/programs introduced without much thought as to whether they would work well or be favorably received by the Tanzanian people. When long-term function and sustainability are not considered up front, many efforts flounder and may eventually die out. Feelings get hurt, God's people divide, and the Lord's reputation is tarnished. These negative impacts could be avoided by developing, testing, and implementing ministry methods and approaches that capitalize on the realities and ways of the existing culture. It's not changing the gospel, but rather bringing it into the culture in relevant ways they can understand and respond to.

"For we are God's fellow workers; you are God's field, you are God's building."

1 Corinthians 3:9

Time and again we have trusted the Lord's leading and seen a successful work come forth, often employing a philosophy or approach we would never have considered. When native people take ownership of programs or projects, the chances for long-term growth and sustainability are improved. One area of differing strategies and approaches is in regard to church-planting. There is disagreement on what is most effective: indigenous, nationally-driven methods, or western-backed, western-funded solutions. Tanzanian Christians tend to focus on the people as the central idea, rather than the building. As such, they can feel just as blessed by everyone meeting under a tree or in a building made of mud and sticks.

***"And they continued steadfastly
in the apostles' doctrine and fellowship,
in the breaking of bread, and in prayers."***

Acts 2:42

In our 8 years of visiting hundreds of churches across Tanzania, we've realized that denominations conceived and led by nationals probably result in the most effective churches which more closely resemble the biblical pattern. So, when we started hearing from Tanzanians that we needed to be more intentional in helping them plant new churches, we knew we had to be careful. Working within their belief that "*what matters most is what's on the inside*," we set out with our leadership team to design, develop, and implement a strategy and vision to train and equip pastoral candidates to plant churches within the context of their own denominations. We carefully designed a 24-day class for equipping a prospective pastor to be able to teach the Bible to people from the first day. Specific church planting principles and methods, as well as church operating and administration procedures, would be left to the national denominations. Students would be in session three times, with each session consisting of eight days. The full 24-day program could be completed in one year. By faith, we scheduled the first class to start in May 2019 with graduation in November.





"For no other foundation can anyone lay than that which is laid, which is Jesus Christ."

1 Corinthians 3:11

We weren't too concerned about achieving perfection for this first class; it was more like a "proof of concept" that we could fine-tune and firm up based on lessons learned during each session. Still, we wanted to be diligent and offer this first class of students the best we could deliver from a curriculum standpoint. We also decided to keep the practical preaching exercises as part of this certificate program because they had proven so successful in the diploma program.

We were helped a lot by what we had learned in the diploma program, but we were still pioneering new ground. We weren't content to offer the certificate students a "lite" version of the same lessons as the diploma students. We wanted to plan for the scenario where a certificate student might someday qualify for the diploma program, so we really needed all new lessons. Developing the new material involved a lot of work, and as each eight-day session approached, we were literally finishing the lessons just as the students arrived!



Class size when it began in May 2019

We started with a large number of students in the first session back in May, but the final number of students who made it to graduation was winnowed down by a number of factors, most notably some flaws in our selection process. We have already revised that aspect and expect much improvement for the two certificate classes scheduled for 2020. Still, the students who *did* finish were outstanding. We expect 75 percent will start a church under their denomination within 6 months of graduating. That is exciting news!



Our graduates



New Year's Challenge

Will You Be a "30 x 50" Champion?

We are praying for the Lord to move upon 50 new supporters to commit to begin giving \$30 per month through the entire 2020 calendar year. This will provide \$1500 to fund 2 new campuses in Uganda and Kenya. Also, since the college diploma program only costs \$150 per student for the whole program, \$30 per month will fund 1 student each month, totaling 12 students per year.

What does this mean? *YOU* can make a big difference for the Kingdom of God without ever leaving home. You might not think that such a small contribution could be that valuable, but it goes a long way toward equipping more pastors to be able to understand the Bible and share the Gospel effectively with their people.

If you are willing to give up a few lattes or one dining out experience each month to help fund these efforts, you may give a tax-deductible contribution electronically through our website by PayPal or credit card, or send a check via the address and instructions on the back cover of this newsletter.

May the Lord's work continue to increase in 2020!

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

www.jimandjanicelarson.com

Picture of the Month

IT'S FURLOUGH TIME!

We have a few dates left in January if your small group or Bible study would like to schedule us to provide an update and answer questions for you.

- 1-5 January: St Petersburg/Tampa FL
 - 6-10 January: Missions Conf, Murrietta CA
 - 11-16 January: St Pete/Tampa FL (Janice)
 - 17-19 January: Greenville/Johnson City TN
 - 20-30 January: Asheville NC
- PLEASE CONTACT US TO SCHEDULE A VISIT



CONTRIBUTIONS PAYABLE & MAILED TO:

Intensive Care Ministries
P.O. Box 109
Mentone, CA 92359-0109

Note "LARSON" in Memo of check

On-line giving available through our website



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PRAYER REQUESTS

- Please pray for our ministry paperwork and work permits/visas to be approved. We've had to get an attorney involved to work through some bureaucratic issues.
- Pray for the ICM-TZ staff as they go back to work this month, conducting a Bible college class with a graduation at the end of the month. This will be the first time we aren't there to officiate!
- We pray for the short time we have to reconnect with family and friends while home. May the Lord help us redeem this time and make the most of it.
- We continue to pray for open doors with new partner churches and potential ministry workers.
- Pray for smooth travel as we return to Tanzania on February 4-5, 2020.