

HEART FOR AFRICA
"TRANSFORMING BIBLICAL PREACHING ONE PASTOR AT A TIME"
FEBRUARY 2021

"Going Mobile"



"Be of good courage, and He shall strengthen your heart, all you who hope in the LORD."

Psalm 31:24

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an entire class of only their pastors, but our waiting list is too long to be that exclusive.

Only the Lord could help us deal with so great a challenge, which He did. Pastor Fredy (one of our teachers) had been imploring us to conduct a marriage seminar at his bishop's church for years, and we were able to do that this past November. The bishop's name is Somi, which in Swahili means "scholar." He has more than 700 churches all across Tanzania under his control. He is very influential, but one of the humblest men we have come across. Several of his pastors have attended our Bible college, and one (Fredy) became an instructor. He was naturally intrigued to meet the people having such a positive impact on his pastors and denomination, and we were happy to bless the ICM-Africa Bible College graduates and staff for their faithfulness.



As we mentioned previously, the Lord is bringing us through an extended season of uncertainty, yet we are certain of one thing—the Lord is with us every step of the way. He reminded us by giving us clear vision for an innovative approach to campuses that will give us access to more pastors with no upfront funding required. We will be able to continue investing in *people* rather than facilities, while providing high quality instruction to pastors who are fully engaged in pastoral ministry and lack the resources to attend seminary.

To date, modest investments have been made in four fixed sites in Tanzania that are equipped to house up to 20 students at a time. These strategically located sites allow pastors from all over Tanzania to attend the rigorous, Bible-centric program of instruction that no other colleges or seminaries we know of in Tanzania offer. Still, there is always the challenge of reaching the most remote areas of the country where travel is difficult and time consuming. In addition, some denominations are large enough that their head bishop wants to create

The bishop's church where we held the marriage seminar was very large and well appointed, and right in the middle of the Masaai tribal lands. There was a fairly large audience in attendance, and we had a really fun day of hand-to-hand ministry again. We had missed this aspect of work over the last couple of years. Later we had a chance to spend a few hours talking with Bishop Somi about the ICM college programs, and he expressed the desire to put as many of his pastors through the program as possible. We explained it would take many



Bishop Somi's church building.

years to accommodate that many pastors under the current admissions process, but we would do our best.

We then got a tour of his whole ministry property and were amazed at the expanse. In addition to the church, they were building a hotel to house their pastors when they came for denominational meetings!!! But then what really caught our attention were the facilities for his large private elementary school that serves more than 700 students, including 100+ boarding students.

We could see dormitory space, a classroom, teachers' quarters, cooking facilities, bathing, and restroom facilities--everything we needed for a Bible college campus! This is where the Lord gave us His vision for a campus that would move around the country, temporarily making use of facilities owned by others. Based on the school's regular schedule and vacation breaks, we could offer up to two cohort classes over the course of 3 years, then close down and move on to the next. This allows the bishop to prioritize the pastors he wants trained, be able to observe the training in process,

and maybe establish his own seminary on the grounds. Bishop Somi's location would serve as our "proof of principle" test site for our "mobile" campus, a ministry innovation the Lord identified for these changing times.

Before now, we did not have the personnel resources to make this happen without adversely impacting our fixed sites. But we now have 20 college instructors which allows us to enact this approach. We already have two more bishops in remote areas who have offered the use of their facilities, so we praise God for His very timely Divine appointments. God is good!



Above: Pastor Fredy, Pastor Edward, and the headmaster of the elementary school inside the classroom we would use.

Below: One of the dormitories we could use.



Below: We Floridians got a kick out of a crocodile statue outside one of the guesthouse buildings!



The crowd at the church gathering.



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

www.jimandjanicelarson.com

Picture of the Month

The inside of Bishop Somi's church where we taught back in November 2020. It is in the shape of a cross and can hold well over 500 people. This was Jim preaching on Sunday morning with Pastor Edward translating.



Front Cover:

Bishop Somi and his wife hosting Jim and Janice in their home for partnership conversations. They gifted Jim with a traditional Masaai cloak and Janice with some fabric for a dress.

Inside Left:

Janice dressed in normal attire for teaching all day, but Pastor Fredy felt she should be dressed in traditional Masaai clothing to make a better impression on the Bishop and seminar attendees. This meant an additional 5 layers of cloth over her street clothes in 90 degree heat for 8 hours!

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

- Praising God for the opportunity to share with 2 churches in East Tennessee last month.
- Paying for Divine appointments at a pastors' conference in mid-February in Florida.
- The international travel restrictions being implemented around Covid may interfere with our return to Tanzania next month. Please pray that God keeps the doors open for us.
- Praying for the Lord to provide many more partnerships in the US during this last month at home to keep up with the opportunities and needs.