

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

MARCH 2022

**"as it is written:
"What no eye has seen,
what no ear has heard,
and what no human mind has conceived"—
the things God has prepared for those who
love him—"**

1 Cor 2:9

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A great spiritual challenge we face in preaching the gospel in Tanzania is false conversions. Unscrupulous evangelists invade this impoverished nation offering blessings to those who will raise their hand for Jesus. These newly-minted Christians expect to receive something of tangible value to improve their life—if not from Jesus, then from the evangelist. They soon learn how to “act Christian” in hopes of getting something rather than willingly surrendering to the Lord.

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.

Romans 12:1

It hurts to know these false converts are stumbling around without hope, lacking the Spirit’s empowering grace. But it can be a tremendous blessing to be around a truly transformed person whom the Lord has called out of darkness into His marvelous light.

Last month, our church in Tanzania lost a dear brother in Christ. Nine years ago, the Lord called Peter out of the deepest, darkest “hell” of an 18-year addiction. Peter’s testimony is absolutely amazing; such a powerful reminder of the Lord’s unfailing love and compassion. His conversion and spiritual transformation were so radical and unmistakable, they left no doubt. Every person he touched could tell that Jesus occupied his heart. Peter dedicated his life to helping people see that there is no sin, no addiction, no wrong life choice which the gospel cannot overcome!

For I am not ashamed of the gospel of Christ, for it is the power of God to salvation for everyone who believes, for the Jew first and also for the Greek.

Romans 1:16

Peter grew up in a privileged world, the son of an Indian father and Tanzanian mother. He finished high school but chose not to attend college. He had one sibling—a younger sister, Patricia—who attended college in the US and returned to Tanzania. Peter’s life went astray early by succumbing to alcohol and heroin. His reputation as an addict was well known. The family tried every earthly thing they could to rescue him.

Patricia was a faithful member of our church from its inception in 2011. She cast her hope on Jesus and asked

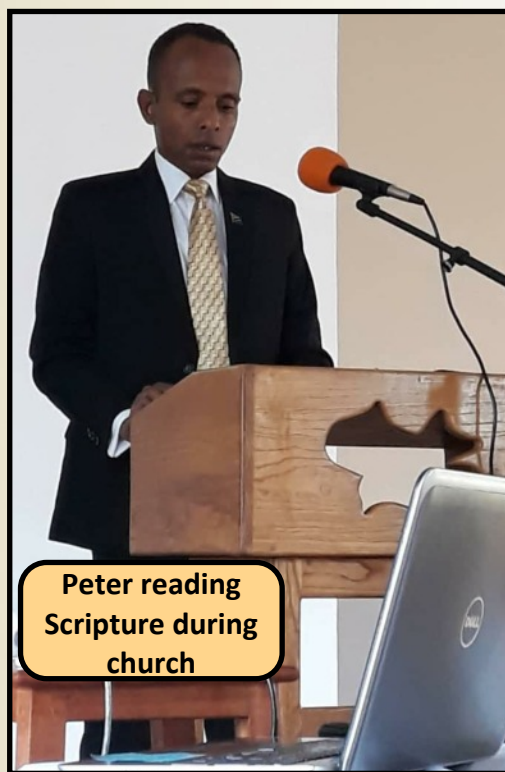
the pastor and our people to pray for Peter. A few years later, Peter agreed to enter an 11-month Christian rehab center in South Africa. The Jericho Recovery Center said they had never received a patient in as poor a physical condition as Peter. We prayed in earnest for his recovery.

He worked hard—really hard—through the pain of detox and breaking old habits. The Lord rescued him in the process. He completed the program and spent another year in a halfway house in Durban. There Peter surrendered His life to Jesus and returned to Moshi as a new creation! We could see the change; he was on fire

for Jesus. He faithfully attended church, sitting on the front row every week with his Bible open and a notebook and pen hard at work. Later he became an elder and did the public reading of Scriptures each week.



Brother and sister, celebrating a birthday.



Peter reading Scripture during church

He became the administrator in his family’s business—a private school for pre-kindergarten through high school. He was instrumental in having us start a Sunday church service at the high school and teaching religious classes at their elementary school. He

desperately wanted these young people to meet Jesus at an early age before they made poor decisions like he did.

At the age of 41, Peter married a wonderful Indian woman named Agnes. She became his partner in so many ways—both at home and in the business—and they were a treasure to be around. She supported his many efforts to improve the education system within Tanzania by administering the schools in his absence.



**Left:
Agnes and
Peter
Right:
with Peter's
mother and
son, Philemon,
and Agnes'
niece, Angeline.**

Unfortunately, Peter's many years of addiction led to a heart-breaking cancer diagnosis in 2020. He and Agnes went to India and lived with her family off and on for the last 2 years while he received many rounds of specialized chemo and radiation treatment. His attitude remained steadfastly positive—always trusting that God would heal him. So many of us prayed for that healing "Lord, please heal and restore this faithful man to your service!"

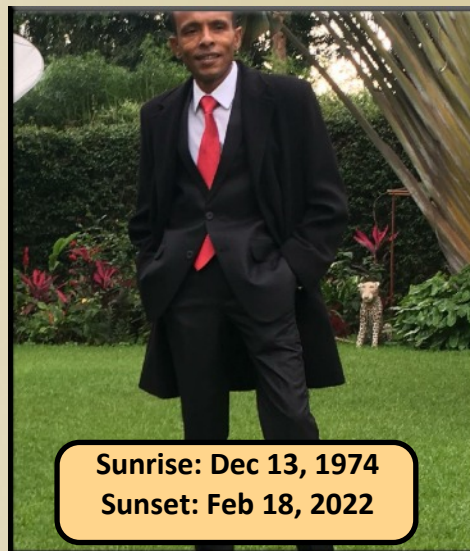
They returned to Moshi this past December, just days before we left to go home on a short furlough. We visited Peter every day, enjoying his wonderful personality and praying with him. We knew the day we left that we would not see him alive again. He passed away 7 days before we returned to Moshi.

His service was attended by hundreds of people from all over Tanzania, all from a variety of educational and religious backgrounds. Our Baptist co-pastor gave a clear Gospel presentation, and the testimony of Peter's life and recovery through Christ was read for all to hear. A week later, the family says that many of the attendees have contacted them asking for information on the recovery center in South Africa, because they have loved



ones who are fighting the same battle. They marvel that if God could transform Peter, when nothing else worked, He could certainly do that for them. Many wanted to share a story about Peter and how he had impacted their lives since his recovery. They commented to the family that they had never attended a service so wonderful. Most funeral services here—even Christian ones—are multi-day events filled with mourning and grief, a lack of hope, and often superstitions. This was a true "celebration of life" that focused on the assurance of salvation and the eternal life believers have in Jesus.

We miss our dear friend. The front row at church is painfully empty now, but we know without a doubt that God's will was done when He used Peter's death to speak to so many hearts. Eyes saw the change in him. Ears heard the testimony and the clear call of salvation. And we all imagine the wonder of heaven as Peter entered in. All glory to God!



**Sunrise: Dec 13, 1974
Sunset: Feb 18, 2022**

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

www.jimandjanicelarson.com

Pictures of the Month



Peter was gifted by God with wisdom and discernment beyond his education, and government leaders listened to and looked up to him.



Left: Peter ensured a cross was included as an integral part of our new church building during construction.

Below: Peter disciplined groups of boys in our Awana program.



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On-line giving available through our website



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Prayer Items

- Janice will be overseeing a women's Certificate in Bible Teaching class in session 18-25 March in Moshi.
- Jim will be doing some teacher training with our instructors 15-17 March up at Mt Meru campus.
- Pray for our travels and time at a conference of missionaries who are serving in East Africa. It is a time of encouragement, networking, and being refreshed in the Lord. Dates are 28-31 March in Zanzibar.
- Pray for Janice to find favor with government officials this month as she begins the process of trying to meet with people to get the ministry paperwork finalized, which has already been sitting for the last 2 years!
- There are other diploma classes and IBS seminars going on this month, so please pray for those students and teachers as they travel to campuses.
- Pray for our small church—that those who heard the Gospel presented at Peter's service might seek us out on Sundays to hear more Truth.