

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

AUGUST 2023

"God is light
and in Him is no darkness at all."
1 John 1:5b



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God is Light!

Light is one of the more popular metaphors in the Bible. By carefully examining its usage, we can see that light most often is a symbol for righteousness, purity, and goodness. Though the Bible says frequently that God is light, He is much more than a symbol for these traits. His very *essence* is light. Everything about Him is completely and perfectly holy. Through and through, He is without corruption by sin or injustice. Only God can say that He is the *source* of light, and only He—by the power of His spoken Word—can create light. Genesis 1:3: ***And God said, “Let there be light”; and there was light.*** In precisely the same way that the essence of the Father is light, so is the same nature embodied in the Son, the Lord Jesus Christ.

“Then Jesus spoke to them again, saying, “I am the light of the world. He who follows Me shall not walk in darkness, but have the light of life.”

John 8:12

An interesting phenomenon which we see in our ministry context is that Christian parents will often name their son or daughter after a biblical character. Just within our ministry team alone, we have the names Emanuel, Obed, Elisha, Jeremiah, Simon, Zechariah, Meshack, Silas, Peter, Mary, and Joshua. They will also use a name that reflects an aspect of God’s nature, such as God is love, God is faithful, God is peace, God is able, God is merciful, and God is light—all rendered in the Swahili language. This story is about a godly woman who uses the name “God is light” or “Elinuru” in Swahili.

“Let your light so shine before men, that they may see your good works and glorify your Father in heaven.”

Matthew 5:16

We met Elinuru in 2017, just after an event that permanently changed the trajectory of her life. As construction workers were putting the final touches on the Mount Meru campus in preparation for its opening, her husband, Melchizedek, fell from scaffolding as he was painting the ceiling boards in one of the buildings. Pastor Loth, the director of that campus, shared the news with us and said that the building Melchizedek was painting was the small two-room house we planned to stay in during our campus visits. Now we *really* felt bad knowing he was hurt doing something for us! Though Melchizedek lived for another 30 days, his broken back and internal injuries were too severe for him to overcome, leaving Elinuru a widow with six children, the youngest of whom was an infant.

At the time, we did not fully understand how the culture would expect us to respond. How involved should we get? Jim felt the Lord move him to attend parts of the 3 days of mourning. That is when and where the bond with Elinuru began. Though she was in mourning, you could see the light of the Lord reflected in all of her interactions with those around her. Coincidentally (God), Janice was immersed in her master’s dissertation at the time, which was on the topic of how local Tanzanian churches could improve their care of widows! Loth’s wife, Lightness, had provided insight to that research project and understood what the role of the church should and could be. It seems we could all sense God was moving us to “walk our talk” in regard to helping with Elinuru’s long-term care. The situation was urgent and, in

Left: Elinuru in front of original mud-brick house, of which the front left had no roof.

Right: Window openings were covered with cardboard and plastic to keep the weather out. Another section without roof.



2017

The front of the house was enlarged to provide a dining and sitting area. Glass windows and secure doors added as well.



2023

all honesty, we could sense the community looking at us expectantly to see if ICM-Africa would reflect the love of Jesus in some kind of response.

Since then, the ministry has provided her a small monthly stipend to cover some needs, but Pastor Loth began exploring options on how she might work and begin to earn a living wage. Buying her a sewing machine and training her as a seamstress was tried, but it wasn't her gift. Then, as the campus expanded and we began scheduling classes there every month, Loth hired her as a cook and Lightness trained her. She has been working for ICM nearly full-time ever since. Additionally, she and Melchizedek had been living in a partially-constructed home which he worked on as he earned money. It would now never get finished with him gone. So, through Loth and his church, ICM-Africa donated leftover building materials and workers to get part of the house roofed and provide some better shelter.

That was 2018, and she has been a faithful worker ever since. When we visit the campus, she is there to greet us and tend to all of our needs. We are so blessed to be around her. Three of her children are now out on their own and the youngest, Elisha, is doing well in elementary school.

Last month, we did a "wellness" check and visited her in her home over some tea and lunch. It's wintertime here, and quite cool in the upper elevations of the mountain. Half the house still had no roof, window openings were covered in cardboard to block the cold wind, and she had no front door. Loth's church is fully committed to looking after her, but the rest of the congregation is as poor as she is, so ICM-Africa partners with them as needed. Everyone felt the Lord would want us to provide her a safer shelter, so Loth obtained an estimate to finish everything—glass windows, doors, roofing, and concrete



The exterior was stuccoed and a rear door added for access to an outdoor kitchen and latrines.

floors—for \$900 total! In addition, we were able to wire her house for electricity and get her connected to the utility poles we had just installed at the campus, so now she and the kids will *all* have light!

God is light, and in Him there is no darkness. Our call is to walk in that light and reflect it to the dark world around us. No one does that any better than Elinuru, as she embodies her name!

Elinuru now has a 3-year old grandchild living with her, in addition to her three youngest children. The challenges of life just keep coming.

FRONT COVER:
Elinuru gives thanks in her expanding home, even while there is no roof overhead.



She served us tea, pancakes, and boiled eggs during our wellness visit.



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

www.jimandjanicelarson.com

Pictures of the Month



The picture on the left is one of the 13 power poles installed last month to bring electricity to the Meru campus, and then connected to our buildings (on the right). This project benefited not only the campus, but allowed other area villagers to now tie into the grid along the route for a mere \$10. ICM-Africa and the local community are grateful for all of the Lord's servants who make this work possible!

CONTRIBUTIONS PAYABLE & MAILED TO:

Intensive Care Ministries
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Note "LARSON" in Memo of check

On-line giving available through our website



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PRAYER REQUESTS

- Pray for Jim and Pastor Edmond who will return to Tanzania from South Sudan on August 3rd after being there since July 18th. They have now finished the 3rd diploma session there.
- Praise that the new Moshi campus continues to be actively utilized, and that we're slowly putting more and more finishing touches on the construction work there.
- Pray for our third class of women who will be in session Aug 17-25, and will graduate with a Certificate in Bible Teaching on the 25th! Many other sessions are continuing around the country.
- Continue to pray for the preparations of starting a new work in Nairobi, Kenya, in September by Jim and Pastor Edmond.
- Praise that we celebrate our 41st wedding anniversary this month!