

World Christian Outreach

Newsletter

July 2024

Go therefore and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, teaching them to observe all that I have commanded you. And behold, I am with you always, to the end of the age.”- Matt.28:19-20



The following is a report from Pastor Eddie Fernandez of Riverside International Church in Portugal on our recent mission trip to Kenya and Tanzania, May 24 to June 30.

24 May to June 8 – KENYA. On 22 May I left for Nakuru County, Kenya. For many years I have ministered all over Africa. In 2022 I took a group of 10 young adults from Riverside to Tanzania. This year the Lord laid Kenya on my heart because, like Tanzania, it is still a majority Christian country in a rapidly Islamizing African continent. In many African countries they do not have the **diverse and bountiful amounts of food** available everywhere in the USA. They also do not have a **great network of asphalt roads** and highways. We often travel 4-5 hours on gravel and dirt roads, filled with potholes and other obstacles, to get to interior towns and villages. They do not have **petrol stations everywhere**. **Petrol** can be sold on the side of the road in plastic bottles. Contrast that to Texas boasting several **Bucees**, the world’s biggest petrol stations with 120+ pumps in a single location. They don’t have **beautiful, hygienic, refrigerated and well-stocked butcheries**. Goat or cow meat hangs on hooks alongside roads, where dust from passing cars and trucks layers everything, exposed to the elements. In most towns we minister at they don’t have **shopping malls, cinemas, theatres, fancy restaurants, or sports stadiums**. Kids play in the dirt with handmade toys. Soccer is everywhere and boys play on open dirt spaces with clothes rolled up and bound with string to serve as a ball. Most children and teens don’t own phones. **You get the idea?** I could go on contrasting our reality to these poorer regions. The truth is we live in very different worlds. That’s why I love taking teams with me.

So, what does the Church in Kenya and Tanzania have that we so badly lack? They have a **hunger and thirst for God** that surpasses anything we witness in many Western churches. They **pray with a power and intensity** that many here have long forgotten. They **praise and worship non-stop for hours, with joy, dancing and excitement** before the Lord of Hosts. They **walk to church, taking 2-3 hours to get there**. They **sing, dance and praise for 2 hours** followed by preaching that lasts a minimum of 1 hour. An average Sunday service lasts 3 hours. Sundays are consecrated to God. We held meetings daily for 300+ pastors & leaders over 5 days in the Jerusalem Church in the town of Kabazi. From the babies to the elderly, everyone sat through session-upon-session from 09h00 until 13h30. A quick meal followed and then we went into afternoon sessions until 17h00 ... that's 8 hours every day and not a soul budged, except for bathroom breaks and bathrooms are rudimentary at best.

At the end of my message, you will see their passion for Jesus. We complain when a service lasts more than 1.5 hours! We lack this love for God's **House**, God's **presence**, God's **Word**, and dare I say, for God **Himself!** They may be poor in worldly terms BUT their wealth in terms of love for God is something we need to recapture. **Sadly, they lack teaching. They don't have well-equipped pastors, preachers or teachers.** Many lead growing churches without solid or adequate Biblical training and foundation.

That's why **Mark Luce**, Director of **World Christian Outreach CA**, and **Andy Wagler**, Director for Africa of **Inste School of Theology**, joined me in Kenya. **Jasson Rubinda**, our good friend and a qualified and gifted pastor from **FPCT Tanga in Tanzania**, came to serve as our interpreter but also as a teacher. Bishop **Steve Mulenga**, General Overseer of the **Free Pentecostal Church of Tanzania**, with well over 2 million members, also came. He is an anointed, gifted, and humble man vested with great authority and responsibility. We stayed for free at the Guest House built by **Stan Herpick**, whose vision birthed **WCO**. WCO financed the Tanzania leg of the ministry where we would be joined later by Pakistani **Evangelist Sohail Peter**, a powerful preacher-pastor, and a man who loves to win souls for the Kingdom. **Joshua and Christopher** came to lead worship. The dream the Lord gave me in 2023, one shared with a Riverside couple, was to start a movement of grassroots Bible Schools to spread all over Kenya. Schools like ours in Riverside with 36 students enrolled. The initial dream, sponsored by that couple, was to train 30 pastors. However, by the time we arrived at Jerusalem Church in Lower Sibukya, Nakuru County, in the Great Rift Valley, we had to turn pastors away because 330 had overextended our seating capacity. Two pastors travelled 605kms from Bungoma to be there!

The Word challenges us. In Acts 1:8, *"... you will receive power when the Holy Spirit has come upon you, and you will be my witnesses in Jerusalem and in all Judea and Samaria, and to the end of the earth."* We were His witnesses all over Nakuru County. Every day we preached 4 sessions in the morning and another 2 sessions in the afternoon. Andy and I focused our afternoons on training a core group who will become Master Trainers, to equip other Bible School facilitators in the future. Thanks to generous donors in Portugal and the USA, everyone received a Facilitator Training Manual and a 300-page copy of Discipleship 1. On the weekends we were assigned to preach in different local churches. **When it came time to say farewell** the Kenyan pastors presented a heartfelt plea, expressed by the Bishop of the **Full Gospel Church of Nakuru County**: *"please, please come back in 2025, we need more of this vital teaching."* It was with a tired body and mind, but a very blessed and full soul, that our team left Kenya headed for the Tanzanian leg.

June 8 to 23 – TANZANIA. We barely had time to offload our luggage before Bishop Mulenga had assigned us to preach in different churches, right as our airplane hit the tarmac at Joseph Kenyata

Airport in Dar es Salaam! Over the next two weeks we would preach and teach in Dar, Mbeya Town, Saza, Arusha, and Babati. On previous trips, at the invitation of Stan Herpick, we made disciples and equipped the Body of Christ in Bukoba, Iringa, Kigoma, Mwanza, Hendeni, Geita, Kahama, Tanga, Usariva, Dodoma and Tabora. This time in one trip we added **five locations**. Jesus said in Matthew 28:19-20, *“All authority in heaven and on earth has been given to me. Go therefore and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, teaching them to observe all that I have commanded you. And behold, I am with you always, to the end of the age.”* That’s why we go on mission trips. We go to preach the Good News. Jesus said in Matthew 24:14, *“And this gospel of the kingdom will be preached in the whole world as a testimony to all nations, and then the end will come.”* I believe this. That’s why over two weeks in Tanzania we never stopped preaching. The schedule was demanding. Our friendly Bishop had us preaching non-stop! This was not a vacation. We would either fly or we would be driven for many hours to the selected locations through the African savanna. Some places are impossible to get to by car. Remember, Tanzania and Kenya are 10 and 6 times, respectively bigger than Portugal! In every city our schedule was similar. We would preach to 300+ pastors & spouses in the mornings, simultaneously we would teach 300+ young adults in different locations. The youth model was pioneered by my daughter, Gaby, who joined me in 2018 and suggested we invest in the emerging generation. Youth conferences took root and have grown. In Mbeya town we had 500+ youth in attendance. As with Kenya, mornings start at 09h00 until 13h30 with 4 teaching sessions interspersed by praise & worship, intensive prayers, and testimonies. We speak at both conferences, being driven back and forth by dedicated drivers.

In the afternoons we preach from big stages, erected for this purpose, with huge loudspeakers to reach crowds of hundreds and even thousands gathering for Gospel Crusades. It is very common to witness people from the towns stopping to listen to what is going on. At every Crusade we pray for those troubled by demons, we lay hands on the sick praying and believing for healing, and we make bold appeals for the lost to be reconciled to God. Hundreds are reached over the week-long Crusades. Local churches follow up on every single soul saved. About 450 were saved this trip.



Pictures don't do justice to what can only be experienced in person. Scripture encapsulates my feelings. Psalm 126:1-6, *"It was like a dream when the Lord brought back to Zion those who had been held in another land. Then we laughed with our mouths, and we sang with our tongues. Then it was said among the nations, 'The Lord has done great things for them.' The Lord has done great things for us and we are glad. Bring back our people, O Lord, like the rivers in the South. Those who plant with tears will gather fruit with songs of joy. He who goes out crying as he carries his bag of seed will return with songs of joy as he brings much grain with him."*

It is overwhelming. A lot is expected by those coming to hear the **"Mzungu Mchungaji"** (Swahili for white pastors) and their African counterparts. We cannot let them down. Our posters are plastered all over each city, town and village. In many places we are received by a welcoming committee of pastors and leaders who give us gifts, mostly Maasai shawls. At times police/military personnel escort us from the tiny airports to the locations where we will stay. As we arrive at a venue church members line the streets waving branches, dancing and singing welcome. At each place we are embraced enthusiastically by multitudes who come to welcome their beloved Bishop and his guests.

I have been doing this for a long time, but I confess that I never lose the feelings of nervousness, anxiety, and inadequacy. Is my message clear enough? **Is it from God or fruit of my own imagination?** My prayer and concern is: ***"Lord, is this your Word, for your people, at this appointed place? More of you Lord, and less of me."*** I think the Lord allows this, so I depend fully on Him and not on my own gifts, talents or abilities. It's so easy to go there, as many do, coming from developed countries, with lots of funds, portraying themselves as better and bigger, not so much as servants. I am delighted that **Mark, Andy, Jason, Sohail, and Steve Mulenga** all have the same spirit as I do. Years ago, I lovingly baptized our group as the **"A-Team"**. The name stuck. We are the **Agape Team**; God's love team coming to serve with our diverse gifts and teaching styles. With my 33 years of ministry as a senior pastor, I am the pastor-teacher among the group. ***But we are all unique and have different preaching/teaching/prophetic gifts. We are all humble enough to recognize that none of this is about us. It all comes from God, and it is all for God alone.*** We are together 24/7 on these trips and we pray together before, during and after times of ministry. God shows up every time and tells us to step aside, after our part is done, and His Spirit does what we cannot do. We get a front row seat to see Him change people's lives and destinies.

People are saved, healed, delivered, restored, equipped, encouraged and empowered in every location. His Kingdom comes and His will is done, on earth, as it is in heaven! Babati was our last location before I headed home on the 23rd of June. In Babati alone we gave out 570 Bibles to youth aged 13 to 25, and less than 10% have a copy of their own Bible. How tragic when I have at least 30 copies of different versions and translations, in my office. How beautiful it is to see young people explode with joy when they get a free copy of the Bible, all thanks to the generous donors from Riverside PT and WCO USA.

This time around not a single young person was left without a Bible. All told 1.110 Bibles were donated to the youth with 300 going to Mafia Island. Thanks to Riverside, I also distributed 150, 30-page documents of my teaching, plus 35 copies of my book. One Bible will be read by an entire family and some families have many kids! They love making babies in Africa. We should learn from them to ensure the survival of our Christian culture in Europe.

(Note from Mark: As Pastor Eddie returned to Portugal, Kathy and I continued for another week and visited New Dawn School for Orphans in Tanzania. More about that in the next newsletter.)