

Palmer December 2018 Trip Report

Summary

Some special conditions about December made me feel this trip was important for recruiting and follow-up work. It is the time of year the majority of congregations in Kenya choose to hold the annual "World Bible School Day," which is an incentive event encouraging, promoting, and acknowledging WBS work in various parts of Kenya. It is also a time when churches of Christ in very many areas hold Youth Conferences (where hundreds gather at one time), since the kids are out of school at the end of the year. My travels went well and I stayed healthy. The tight schedule did cause me to miss one appointment, when my domestic flight was delayed, leaving too little time for a trip to one of the youth conferences.

Kakuma Refugee Camp

Early this year I made a connection with a young Christian, a Congolese refugee living in Kenya's largest refugee camp. His name is Rashid Elocho. He studied WBS with Don McAdoo of the Lake Houston congregation in Humble, Texas. He had formerly been taught about the church by his uncle while he lived in Tanzania's largest refugee camp. This year Rashid attended our WBS workers' conference in Nairobi in June. Since then he has taught all of the available WBS courses in Swahili

(through *Born of Water and the Spirit*) to 100 of his fellow Congolese refugees in the Kakuma 2 Refugee Camp. He has also drawn together men from denominational backgrounds and started the church which has a membership of about 40 and weekly attendance of 180 to 200. This church and its leaders were in need of grounding, teaching and guidance. The WBS Service Center Director for Kenya, Richard Karima, had made a visit and baptized some of the first members in August. He was very eager to capitalize on this Kingdom opportunity, so I took him with me. We taught a 3-day seminar in the Kakuma 2 Camp. The seminar is called '*New Testament Christianity and the Church of Christ.*'

Kakuma, with its neighboring "settlement" (Kalobeyei), is Kenya's largest refugee camp. The population is over 150,000 and growing. Only 1500 to 3000 a year are expatriated to other countries, and the current rate of growth from new arrivals 9,600 a year. The location is remote and far from town centres. Both Richard and I had to take flights to get to the region.



Richard Karima and Rashid Elocho walk the Kakuma 2 Camp grounds.

The seminar was successful with 65 people from 20 denominations registering, and 30 from the newly started Church of Christ. All of the participants had completed the Swahili WBS courses, and the seminar was combined with a graduation ceremony for them. Further teaching is available for these seekers since the last 2 WBS courses in Swahili are finished, one ready for use (*Family of God*), and one waiting funds for printing (*Live a Life of Love*). There were 2 baptisms at the end of the seminar. This was this congregation's first opportunity for foundational teaching, other than what they learned through WBS on conversion.



Participants in New Testament Christianity and the Church of Christ seminar take their exam

Reportedly from its own collections, the church has put up a sizable wood-frame, corrugated-tin-wall-and-roof building. The structure is in need of considerable repair, due to termite damage. The congregation has three "pastors." (This may be premature, since as the men are coming straight from denominational backgrounds). It remains to be seen if they respond to biblical teaching on instrumental music, church organization, and so on.

Kakamega Annual Church of Christ Lectureship



Around 80 people attended this lectureship/general meeting. All are leaders in the churches of Christ. Areas best represented were Western Kenya, Central Province, and the Rift Valley. I was given an hour to present the WBS ministry opportunity. I had recruitment supplies available and distributed to those who registered to participate in recruiting. 32 men and 2 women registered, though several were men who had already been recruiting for WBS to some extent since the 2014 GBEA campaign.

Uasin Gishu Annual Youth Conference

The North Rift Valley churches held their annual Youth Conference from the 11th to the 16th of December. I had intended to attend the Baringo County Youth Conference on the 15th and the Uasin Gishu Conference on the 16th. However my flight from Kakuma was delayed, not leaving enough time for the long drive to and from Baringo. The packed UG Conference schedule left me a short period at the very end of the day on the 15th to offer WBS enrollment to the 510 youth. The initial response was less than I had hoped, but the churches' youth ministers were continuing to enroll people to the end of the conference and beyond. The day before I came, they had baptized 90 of the young people.



510 young people attend the annual N.Rift Valley Churches of Christ Youth Conference

I was the guest preacher on Sunday. Following services, 30 area preachers had a strategy meeting. WBS became one focus of the meeting. 24 preachers from around North Rift Valley registered to become recruiters in their home areas. These are separate from an organized group of 7 evangelists calling themselves the North Rift Valley WBS Team, led by Joseph Muhoro in Eldoret. That team strategically targets and follows up schools and other venues for regular WBS recruiting, lesson distribution and collection. They reportedly get some transportation help from missionary Keith Gafner, and scan their returned lessons to John Beeman of Eastridge Church of Christ in Rockwall, TX.

Status of the Nairobi (Eastleigh) WBS Service Center

Richard Karima has been growing more efficient, it seems, at operating Service Center activities. My last day in Kenya we organized bundles of Swahili WBS lessons to go to places needing re-

stocking. I sent WBS ID cards to 12 recruiters, and gave small “encouragement packets” to about 13 WBS area coordinators. This included a few WBS-Kenya pens, and copies of WBS’ books *Guide to NT Christianity*, *Test the Spirits*, *Prayer*, and Cleddy Varner’s book on The Lord’s Supper. Thank you, Cleddy, for your donation of the copies of your book!

Charlotte Hackett is the missionary at Eastleigh. She and I discussed at length the present and future of the WBS Service Center there. I asked her to collaborate with Richard to find a suitable assistant and “back-up” person for the Service Center operations. I will also use a couple of other resource people in Nairobi to find possible candidates for that position. Richard is in the common position of having many responsibilities other than the WBS office, and he is not getting any younger—probably is 65 now.

One advantage of Eastleigh being our Service Center for Kenya is the secure, spacious, technology-friendly nature of the facilities. There are currently about 24,000 copies of Swahili WBS courses in the WBS office with plenty of room to spare (the office is about 25’x25’). As a precaution, I authorized buying/making skids to get the stacks of books off the cement floor. We learned from experience at the Ruai WBS office that flooding is a danger anywhere. One blessing is that our printer, Evangel Publishing, does a fantastic job of delivering lessons in bundles that are professionally wrapped in heavy plastic.



**Nairobi Church of Christ Eastleigh (NCCE)
hosts the WBS office for Kenya**

'WBS Day' Celebrations and Tents



**WBS Day in Kisumu, Kenya. 14 congregations with
over 250 in attendance.**

Up to 15 congregations usually host a "WBS Day" celebration each December. These events are attended by representatives of fellow congregations in each area, so that probably 40+ congregations actually participate. I had hoped to be present at one or two of these, but my itinerary and local scheduling needs prevented me from doing so. Reports are coming in from where the events took place of good participation and new WBS enrollment.

This year some funds were used to provide key recruiters with booth-style tents and display posters. These are a huge boost and motivator to recruiters who can take them anywhere and draw people to enroll in WBS.



Student enrollment in the new WBS booth-tent