

Palmer Trip Report

July, 2019

Summary

The logistics of this trip went like clock-work, for which we are always grateful (and a little surprised!). We had great health and no accidents. I avoided 2 speeding tickets in Tanzania by giving WBS lessons to the police. (Don't judge me!—their highway cops are sneakiest, trickiest and least understanding in East Africa—unless you are a Christian worker!). We conducted 3 WBS recruiting campaigns, 2 national WBS Leaders' workshops, a WBS follow-up Seminar, and 2 country Service Center reviews and 2 Service Center upgrades. Only one school visit was made, as in both Kenya and Tanzania schools had gone on break.

Kenya WBS Leaders' Workshops

I was selective this year so as to have smaller attendance with the most productive WBS "coordinators." We had 8 attend the Nairobi workshop. They were from central Kenya, the Nairobi area, and the coast. 13 attended the Kericho workshop, representing western Kenya and the Rift Valley. The main objective of these workshops was to train and equip the men to hold their own Recruiters



WBS Leaders' Workshop Nairobi



WBS Leaders' Workshop Kericho

Training Workshops for 15 to 20 people later in the year. We introduced new tools, including a "buffer course" to give to students who returned their Short Intro answers. This is to try and tie the students over so they don't get too discouraged during the potentially long wait for their next lessons to arrive from the US by post. I have enclosed a sample of the "buffer course" I wrote and printed, called *Are You a Seeker?* It has its limitations, but I needed something NOW to address this need. It was well received by the recruiters, as was the idea of other such materials for the future.

Feedback from recruiters is an important part of these workshops. The consistent observation/request is for financial help for transportation to schools and for recruiting follow

up (returning to check on students who enrolled). With a few exceptions most still seem to think that the youth and schools are the only target where recruiting can be done. I keep trying to broaden their thinking and activities on where to recruit.

Besides the leaders who attended the workshops, I have a list of another 25 active WBS recruiters whom I call "Tier-2 workers." The number of these keeps growing. I sent "motivational packets" to 15 of these with a letter, instructions, and some recruiting supplies. We are making efforts to expand our workbase since Ruai (the

previous WBS office supported by Golf Course Road Church of Christ) will no longer be sending out recruiters for Cedar Park.

WBS Recruiting Campaigns

At the invitation of part-time missionary Chad Garrett from the Gold Hill Rd. Church of Christ in Fort Mill, S.C., our first campaign was in **Nyansakia, Kenya**, just outside of Ogembo (not to be confused with the Nyansakia 30 miles away that we tried to drive to in the pouring rain at first). The congregation there is one of the oldest in Kisii County and has three elders. Chad has been a champion of WBS in Kenya, especially the Swahili version which potentially could reach 5 times as many people as the English. It is Chad's efforts that raised most of the funds for the 20,000 Swahili WBS courses now in print in Kenya.



Market Recruiting during Nyansakia Campaign

The campaign ran for 3 days and had 26 participants, including 6 preachers from other congregations in Kisii and Bomet Counties. The church neighborhood, and two market centers, about 2 and 4 miles away respectively, were targeted. 127 were enrolled. The Nyansakia elders signed our Swahili WBS Agreement in which they promise to follow a few efficiency guidelines in their use of the donated Swahili materials.

Our second campaign was at the only two congregations in **Embu County**, 3 hours north of Nairobi on the east side of Mount Kenya. The two days at the Kithimu church had 16 participants and enrolled 128 students. The Kathangariri church had 16 participants and enrolled 158 people. We also visited the Kagumori Secondary



Team Reports in Kithimu after an afternoon of recruiting

School and addressed the whole student body (100+) to offer free WBS registration. As of this writing, 8 students have returned their answers. The campaign culminated in a Sunday 'Thanksgiving Day Fund-Raiser' that the congregation had planned beforehand. It was attended by many in the community. About 10 preacher students from Nairobi came (Ezekiel, the

preacher at Kathangariri, is an instructor at IPCM in Nairobi). The attendance was over 100.

Our final campaign was in **Mwanza, Tanzania**. Elaine and I took the bus from Nairobi to Arusha, and picked up missionary Lewis Short's Landcruiser for the 14-hour drive to Mwanza. Tizo, the Tanzania Service Center director, his assistant Kishumui, and Lewis' worker/driver Albert accompanied us. Missionary Eric Guild, who was on furlough, graciously let us use their guest house to lodge in. The Michungwani Church of Christ hosted the campaign, and had invited the preachers from 4 other congregations (one about 150 miles away!) to participate. 17 men

helped with neighborhood/market recruiting for 3 days. 291 people were enrolled, but of those only 9 registered for the English courses. Thanks to a printing run just done in Arusha by the Monrovia Church of Christ (Madison, AL), plenty of Swahili WBS courses are available for cooperating churches to use in their local outreach.



Michungwani church building and the neighborhood of the campaign

'WBS Followup' Seminar at IPCM

Our last 2 days in Kenya were spent conducting a *Discovering NT Christianity* seminar for 20 preacher students at Eastleigh's **Institute of Practical Christian Ministry** in Nairobi. Though designed for "graduating" WBS students, the seminar lays foundations for incorporating people into the church of Christ, and it is hoped it will become a tool often used by preachers around Kenya. Taking the course is the initial training for preachers who will then teach it. I am always asked to teach this at IPCM when there is a new class (every two years). Our Kenya Service Center director, Richard Karima, is on the staff and is an administrator at the school. His enthusiasm for WBS makes the school a training ground for WBS workers. This year they are holding monthly WBS recruiting campaigns themselves around Nairobi and elsewhere.

Kenya Strategy

Some bold new steps have been initiated as of this month. Except for minimal logistical funds (\$40 a month) to keep mail going from the past WBS office at Ruai to our new WBS office in Eastleigh, no funds are now going from WBS to Golf Course Road in Midland. Their paid workers are no longer doing any recruiting for Cedar Park. Possibilities for use of those funds have come from feedback given by the recruiters at the WBS leaders workshops:

-- Monthly "operating expenses" to key "coordinators" to help with transportation to schools, etc. (Possibly \$25 a month to 20 workers, requiring accounting and consistent results).

-- Pay postal box rental for key areas. (School postal addresses are no longer reliable. School officials do not pay their rent or check their boxes, and thousands of student lessons are lost).

- Funding assistance for effective locally initiated recruiting campaigns
- Funding assistance for existing programs known to be effective (eg, WBS Days).
- Possibly funding a National Trade Fair booth as in Uganda

Tanzania Strategy

I have about reached the conclusion that a totally new approach will be needed to effectively get English students in Tanzania. The existing churches and workers cannot be relied on for that—they are only geared for work in Swahili. If WBS is willing to select, train and fund our own worker(s) to target English audiences, that is one possible way to get results. If we assign the proper worker(s) to initiate English recruiting through radio, newspaper and even TV adds, that is another. If we go through government channels to get official recognition of WBS materials for English medium schools, that might open some doors.

I believe without WBS (or a sponsor) hiring and supplying travel funds to a full-time worker who is educated



Delivering the 1st of 20,000 Swahili WBS lessons printed in Arusha by Monrovia CoC

and gifted to target English audiences, no significant English recruiting is likely to take place in Tanzania. Someone who might eventually be qualified for that is Kishumui (Tizo's assistant), but he is young, and an older "respectable" representative may be needed. Hiring is a deviation from normal WBS policy, and we would need to consider how with a paid worker we could gradually increase national (Tanzanian) church involvement rather than alienate it. Many places in TZ are probably ready to move ahead with Swahili WBS, but seemingly not English, at least not on their own initiative.

A very recent development is that former Chimala missionary Chad Wagner is planning to mobilize some workers in Dar Es Salaam and on the coast to do English recruiting. That will be a big boost to this need.

Uganda

I am tentatively planning a trip to Uganda in November. The remarkable increase in enrollment there last year needs further explanation and encouragement. I am awaiting a proposal now from Kampala/Jinja whether to use funds are for a national Trade Fair booth this year. Enrollments and lesson returns for this year seem to be steady.

South Sudan

With the West Side Church in Searcy taking the lead (ostensibly) in grading and supplying courses, I have wondered about the importance of Cedar Park's role there. How to effectively expand beyond the city of Juba has not yet become apparent. The worker Patrick's leaving also suggests a review of our involvement or approach. Patrick is "training" another member in Juba to operate WBS there, but it has been his personal dedication is what made things work well. He reports from 2017 to the present **1,750** students were enrolled, **1,453** finished all the courses, and "a general total" of **67** were baptized.