

## Palmer Trip Report August 2021

### Travel Fun

On this trip we experienced more irregularities than on probably any trip we have taken. Virtually all of them were Covid-19 related. Our initial departure from DFW was delayed 2 days when upon arrival for check-in our covid test results were rejected since the 72-hour window would expire before we reached Kenya. We had gotten the test as close to flight time as possible in Abilene. A somewhat expensive fast results test in Dallas allowed us to proceed. On this one-month trip Elaine had to get pcr tested five times and I seven times. Tanzania also threw in an extra antigen test each upon arrival there (not for free!). With appreciation we report all tests were negative. We remained well and quite undisturbed by physical maladies the whole trip.



One of many

### South Sudan



Selected WBS representatives for the 9 congregations

My last trip to Juba was in the summer of 2019. The same congregation hosted this year, a 2-day Bible seminar and 1- day National WBS workshop. Calling it “national” might be exaggerating slightly since representatives from every congregation in every region of S. Sudan were not (and couldn’t have been) there, but we had the widest representation of any meeting I have done there in the past. 9 congregations were represented by 43 participants from 5 areas in addition to Juba.

Since the departure of our original S. Sudan WBS Service Center director for 4 years of Bible College in Ghana (2 ½ years ago) a shortage of available manpower in Juba had caused most WBS outreach to stagnate. Even so, a couple of new areas where online

WBS and WEI students responded led to new congregations. One of those areas is Aweil on the far northwest. Evangelists have also opened new work in Golyar, making full use of the small quantity of paper WBS courses they had received from Juba and from Kenyan brothers. Our workshop was exciting as enthusiasm and readiness to expand WBS both in Juba and up-country was unanimous. Ten representatives from 10 congregations were given supplies to go help their congregations make WBS recruiting on their areas as effective as can be.

God is always working, even when we don't see or know it! While our doctrinal seminar was going on in Juba, someone in the kitchen where the ladies were cooking each day was sharing Jesus! On the last day, 9 of the ladies were baptized, and also one man!



**One of nine women and one man baptized at the end of the Juba Seminar**

The historical and considerable main challenge in S. Sudan remains. No postal system requires that courses be air-freighted to Juba or be carried in the luggage of visiting Americans. Frankly, the airfreight actually comes to a reasonable cost, with near instant and guaranteed delivery. 80 lbs costs a total of about \$700 (or less), *including* customs duty if that is charged at all. Exploring getting larger shipments, whether by land or air, needs to be investigated.

The S.Sudanese brethren's consensus was that having Juba as the WBS center is best, from where other areas may be serviced by workers who come and go. A readiness to register significantly greater numbers of students needs to be matched by supplying inventory. The West Side church of Christ in Searcy has borne the major part of supplying courses so far. On 2 trips, I took extra answer sheets for each course so that one book can be used with multiple students. The workers are currently geared to make photocopies of the answer sheets to keep enough on hand to meet demand.

A pressing need in S.Sudan is for the WBS study edition Bibles. The church in Aweil of some 10 members are all sharing just one Bible. It is a predominantly Muslim area and usually no Bibles are available in stores there.

Getting funds to S. Sudan from the US can be a challenge. Moneygram does not send to there from many areas, and its changing policies make it hard to depend on. Western Union is reported to be unreliable. I carried support money from West Side in cash when I went. Since more recruiters are getting more students in more areas, basic operations funding to Juba is needed. Within the country mobile (phone) money transfers are effective. It is also reported that other viable delivery systems for courses are there in lieu of postal services.

I had hoped on this trip to practice and establish 2-way scanning from Juba to the sponsor, West Side, but power outage foiled that while I was there.

### Western Kenya Workshop

On August 7<sup>th</sup> we had a Western Kenya WBS coordinators' Workshop/Conference in Mumias. 18 participants from 15 congregations attended. One group not always at our sessions consisted of 4 men working with the WBS program sponsored by Mayfair Church of Christ in Huntsville, AL. It was important for our workers to understand the difference but compatibility of a sponsored regional work like that and the national approach of the



**Lunch Break at the Mumias WBS Coordinators' Workshop**



God Bless East Africa initiative from Cedar Park, especially since Mayfair just placed a large inventory of WBS courses and Bibles at their facility in the heart of Western Kenya.

This regional gathering was the only workers' workshop for Kenya that I could fit into the schedule on this trip, though some 20 other coordinators and recruiters were sent encouragement packages of some supplies and the first-ever run of WBS polo shirts. (Those were a hit). Also the newly designed durable WBS posters with the Lite app QR code have begun to be distributed to coordinators.

### Prepositioned Courses in Nairobi

A long-anticipated step forward was accomplished when one pallet of World Bible School study bibles and one pallet of Master Series courses reached the Kenya Service Centre in Eastleigh, Nairobi, on August 10<sup>th</sup>. Willing US study helpers can now order books from within Kenya to go to their students there instead of receiving the books from Cedar Park, preparing them and mailing them at a high cost and significant risk of loss and delays in the postal systems.

A new inventory clerk for the Nairobi Service Center, Emily Jumbale, was added in August. She is a capable 29-year-old woman, a graduate of KCITI technical college whose campus is the property of Nairobi Church of Christ, Eastleigh, where our Service Center is located. She will be the assistant for the director, Richard Karima, taking over scanning and handling the flow of prepositioned courses. She is bright and energetic, with a very pleasant personality.



### Monduli Service Center

Having essentially replaced Tizo (who did not have the time to do the Service Center duties) with Kishumwui, I found the Monduli Center to be operating quite efficiently. "Kish" is full-time, so actively goes to schools for recruiting, lesson delivery and pick-up, and follow up. He has kept exact records of student enrollment and progress.

Concentrating on English student enrollment in schools, the Service Center has made relatively little use of the Swahili courses, though their stock of early courses is very low, doubtless from filling requests of congregations or other ministries using them.

We discussed at length getting legitimacy for WBS and its office in the eyes of government officials, especially the revenue office. Our good fortune so far has been due to there being understanding government officials, which could change at any time. One preferred suggestion is for WBS to register as an NGO in Tanzania. Tizo has some expertise in this, having gone through the process for other missionaries. The advantages are great, and the cost is negligible. We all noted the greatest risk is in what Tanzanians are put in as Trustees, but they could be as few as three people.

## Dar Es Salaam

On August 17 the Temeke Church of Christ in Dar Es Salaam hosted our city-wide WBS workshop for church leaders. The last workshop and campaign we had done was in 2017 at the Mbagala congregation. This time 48 people registered from 12 congregations. The meeting was billed as a "conference" because participants were asked to brainstorm and offer suggestions for how WBS can move forward in and around Dar Es Salaam, both the English recruiting and the Swahili programs.



**Supplies and Participants,  
Dar Es Salaam WBS Conference**

God blessed the event, and a consensus was reached on a way forward. Under the Temeke elders, a WBS office will locate at the Temeke facility with someone they appoint to oversee WBS. A WBS representative

will be chosen in every congregation to serve their area and bring English answer sheets to Temeke for forwarding to the Monduli Service Center electronically. If possible, a supply of courses will be kept at Temeke. I will offer Temeke an agreement proposing some operating expenses to be given by WBS each month, to come out of recruiting funds. The Temeke coordinator will be responsible to apply the funds the most effectively for maximum participation, recruitment, and delivery of lessons across the city. Swahili WBS will be the responsibility of the Dar congregations, but if at all possible, printing them in Dar will be pursued.

## Koma Rock

The zeal of one of the evangelists at Koma Rock Church of Christ in Nairobi, Joshua Ogada (a WBS Follow Up Partner), helped us recognize a bug in the Lite app. Joshua is enrolling young people left and right to use the Lite app. I have high praises for our tech team who jumped on this recognized deficiency and fixed it in about one day! Koma Rock is also where our "extension" Service Center worker, Joyce Matini, works from. She is processing about 50 students' lessons per month that come in as photos on WhatsApp. That number is expected to climb dramatically as more recruiters go to this fast and inexpensive way to return lessons. Koma Rock members are also busy using WBS courses for in-person Bible studies.



**Personal study with Carla Dean's workers after they finished *The Way to Life***

## Mail

I checked in with our contacts at the offices of the Kenya Postal Corporation and of Skyplan International. (The latter has for some years handled mail sent through Alpha Mailing Solutions in Cedar Park). I was concerned because in several cases with which I was personally involved sending lessons this spring the recipients have yet to see the courses. Some of these shipments were first-time mailings by congregations that are re-launching their postal programs. The loss of those courses would undoubtedly discourage those fledgling study helpers. To avoid that I am training as many places as fast as possible to use the new prepositioned courses system for both Kenya and Uganda. So far three have begun.

A small number of the now stocked prepositioned courses are designated as "replacement" courses for recruiters to request when their students have waited 6 months or longer and never gotten their 2<sup>nd</sup> lesson. To bolster the number of available courses for that purpose I ordered 2,000 *God Has Spoken* courses to be printed in Nairobi, using a layout Kevin gave me a couple of years ago. The cost was 60 cents each. They were not finished by the time I left Nairobi, so I have not seen and felt the finished product.

## Recommendations

The urgency of non-postal delivery (prepositioning) continues to be re-inforced to me. This means being ready in 2022 to either print in country or ship more books. I also need to increase the number of congregations willing to do 2-way scanning in Kenya and Uganda.

Despite there being others who are supplying some areas with Swahili WBS courses, it is time to print more of those if funds can be raised for that. More places are getting more organized and effective with their Swahili WBS programs. Dar Es Salaam needs its own source of the books, which in my view will serve as incentive and synergy to grow their English recruitment programs.

I visited with the manager of Good News Productions in Nairobi. He is doing the groundwork to know our best options (with pricing, etc.) for mass advertising. Radio spots are thought to be the most likely to have the most results. I hope to use about \$1500 for that in the next couple of months, likely with 60-second dramatized ads.