

Palmer Trip Report February 2023

Summary

This trip went as smoothly and according-to-plan as any I have had. I feel very good about the trip objectives having been met and I was blessed by the trip.

Tanzania

I did not reach Tanzania at all in 2022, so it was important for me to touch base with the Service Center workers and have hands-on time in the area where almost all Tanzania results are currently taking place. I have “retired” our former Service Center operator, Tizo Joseph, but will keep using him on a consulting basis when needed. The current director is Kishumui Laizer, a graduate of Andrew Connally School of Preaching in Arusha. He is both capable and dedicated. His role extends beyond the Service Center office work as he is about the only one going out to recruit, targeting schools within his geographic area. My attempts in 2022 to get



Lowassa Secondary School hears the WBS enrollment offer



Alpha Omega High School principal (left) receives a complimentary WBS Bible after the student body is invited to enroll

bodies of approximately 150, 300, 300, and 500, as well as the faculties of those schools. All of these schools already have a number of students at various stages in the Master Series curriculum. The new school year (January) offered the opportunity of many more enrollments. Tumaini Senior Secondary School had 15 ready to receive their WBS Graduation Certificates the day we visited. They had already received their Bibles after finishing *Born of Water & the Spirit*.

English enrollment going in Dar Es Salaam were not very effective. I have quit funding the sub-office there. Multiple trips to other areas over the years to get English recruiting participation have been pretty ineffective. Occasionally a Tanzanian preacher wants to go on salary to do WBS work, but will not do it otherwise. The Monrovia Church of Christ sponsors (supports) WBS workers in perhaps 5 places in Tanzania and receives English lessons from them for grading. However they have come to emphasize using Swahili WBS in those works.

Kish, Tizo and I visited four school campuses and held a small WBS workshop for preachers at the Monduli Juu congregation. We addressed student



15 Graduate from WBS at Tumaini in Tanzania

Nandi County Campaign

Although we at one time had a WBS coordinator in Nandi County, I have never done a workshop or campaign there. A coordinator in nearby Kericho County, **Nixon Mutai**, is working with brothers in five congregations near Kaptumo in



Enego Church of Christ hosted the Campaign

Nandi County. He organized our campaign there. Some nine preachers participated in that 2 ½ day campaign. We went to five schools and one marketplace. Enrollment at the schools was left to a school staff member to complete, so I haven't gotten the head count yet. Enrollment at Nundio Trading Center after one morning was 80.

Nixon is excited to see WBS integrated into the evangelism and church planting in that area. The area preachers also showed enthusiasm. It is now up

to us to ensure rapid grading and delivery of next lessons so that the campaign efforts are not stymied. I have indicated across the board among our main recruiters that next lessons will come as quickly as possible from the inventory in Nairobi. Any other promise, such as delivery of lessons mailed directly from the USA, is not a truthful promise that we can make, given unreliable postal mail systems.

Nyachenge (Kisii) Campaign

When I choose places for a workshop or campaign on my trips it seems the Lord orchestrates where I end up. That seems to be the case with Nyachenge, which was chosen after a couple of other options didn't materialize. Last year an evangelist there began school enrollments with great results. Nyachenge is an older, well-established congregation located by the home of the current principal of Nairobi Great Commission School, George Onchangwa (though Nairobi is a 7-hour drive away). The campaign had 20 participants. We did neighborhood and public recruiting at trading centers around Nyachenge,



Campaigners get ready to go out in Nyachenge, Kenya



45 attend the Kenya National WBS Conference in Nairobi

and near two other congregations, Tabaka and Gesonso. We also presented WBS at three schools. **Enrollment during the 2 ½ days was 482.**

Kenya National WBS Conference

No national conference was held in Kenya in 2022. This event is important to bring a sense of comradery and connectedness to the WBS outreach taking place around the country. Many recruiters see known brothers who they have not seen in a long time. Other new workers see and

realize they are part of something big. Important training and re-training in the latest WBS tools and approaches are given, with participatory strategizing and problem solving. It is also an ideal time to give recruiters supplies for their work to carry home with them.

I budgeted for 50 participants this year. Out of some 65 invited the final account was 45. The home of our WBS Service Center, Nairobi Church of Christ Eastleigh, was the venue, as it has been for the past few national conferences. The Kenya Service Center director at Eastleigh, Richard Karima, felt the conference had a very positive impact, especially being near the start of the year as this one was.

Koma Rock and Kangemi

Two activities I had not scheduled but which I am very excited about having experienced are the one-day recruiting campaign at the **Koma Rock church of Christ** and the Sunday worship at **Brookside Church of Christ**, both in Nairobi.

Several members of Koma Rock had just participated in the Nyachenge campaign and decided to do their own campaign as soon as they got back home to Nairobi. 18 showed up on Saturday morning for orientation and then went out in five teams to the neighborhood around the church building. After morning and afternoon outings, the enrollment count was 270. There was a lot of excitement about the receptivity of the people of Nairobi to this tool. In the next couple of days some 30 answer sheets had been returned and the enrollees were eager for their next course.



A break during the Conference on the Church (NCCE) / Preaching School(IPCM) / Trades School (KCITI) campus in Nairobi



Recruiters get training before hitting the streets of Nairobi



The Koma Rock neighborhood is highly receptive

The preacher driving Koma Rock's evolution into an "on-fire WBS church" is Follow Up Coordinator and Partner **Joshua Ogada**. He now and intends to organize going to every Nairobi congregation to show them how to do a recruiting campaign. He is also targeting schools in the city. PRAY FOR the Koma Rock team!

One of the preachers at Brookside church of Christ in Kangemi, Nairobi, is WBS online Follow Up Partner **Sebastian Nyabera**. His role with WBS was one reason I wanted to visit there.



Sebastian Nyabera, a WBS Follow Up Partner in Nairobi

The location is in Nairobi's most populated low-income neighborhood. It was one of the most challenging places for worship I have ever experienced. Their small rented school classroom is surrounded on Sunday morning by four denominations meeting at the same time, all using loudspeakers, drums and similar paraphernalia. To be heard in their own small space our brothers (and I) had to shout!

It was quite gratifying meeting Sebastian who understands and uses well the WBS online follow up system. Several of the 23 registered Follow-up Partners in Kenya are essentially inactive for various reasons, the main perhaps being not grasping the online procedures. (They are not inactive in

evangelism, but in completing some of the steps in follow up, such as reporting results). It is a difficult volunteer job because distance, not knowing other preachers to contact, and lack of readiness by the students themselves can factor into many follow up assignments.

Service Centers

The new 2-way scanning guidelines, using cover sheets and recording inventory and transaction data in official spreadsheets on One Drive, were reviewed both in Nairobi and in Monduli. Those offices should be ready to roll on those. Though I was not in Uganda on this trip, throughout this period we've been addressing issues in Jinja that have come up, particularly the crashing of the WBS computer. Functional Wi-Fi has also been a major problem there. With a new computer, hopefully connectivity issues will also be resolved since they've gone to a different provider.

Observations/Recommendations

The African brethren always have some suggested solutions to the number one set-back in WBS outreach, that is, the delay in getting students their second and subsequent courses. Letting the recruiters do some grading, or having specified "fast track" systems for some students have been suggested. Until 2-way scanning is broadly and efficiently working, some alternate approaches like these may need to be considered, even if just for specific circumstances and targets. At the very least, more short buffer courses should be provided to give to students **something** while they wait for their next courses.

Registering WBS as an NGO in Tanzania

The workers in Tanzania are urgent about **the need for WBS to be a legally recognized organization there**. WBS cannot presume to operate just as a ministry within the registered churches of Christ, especially since it is not under any eldership or the board of trustees of the church registration. Government officials routinely ask for authorization documents, especially when schools are targets for WBS enrollment. Local officials have so far been gracious as the work is mainly limited to Monduli District. Getting into the larger audience of Arusha and other cities may prove harder without proper documentation of legal status. The Monduli brethren have experience setting up an NGO and have the details of the process and cost. Choosing board members is one important consideration. The brethren are ready to get going on it if WBS decides this is a good move.

Swahili WBS

The brethren continue to plead for the Swahili WBS courses (SBU). At the end of 2021 I decided to sever “sponsorship” (official oversight) of SBU by WBS. This was because: (a) funding for SBU, formerly done by earmarked donations, was not there; (b) there was inadequate oversight and accountability for the SBU materials and usage; (c) it seemed outside the parameters/mission of WBS . Whatever books were in stock were put under our Service Center Director, Richard Karima, to oversee, and he was instructed NOT to use WBS funds for any aspect of the SBU work. Other sources of the materials (eg, those printed and sent over by Jim McPeak) are not managed by Karima, but likely are managed by either Kenya School of Preaching (Kisumu, Kenya) or the Butere, Kenya, WBS office sponsored by the Mayfair Church of Christ. It may be that the most effective way forward for SBU is for one or more US churches to seriously adopt this ministry. SBU can potentially reach millions in 6 nations who cannot use the English courses.



The Master Series in Swahili. *Guide to NT Christianity* is also available, and soon *Test the Spirits* will be ready to print.