

## Palmer Trip Report February 2024



### Summary

The logistics of my trip went well, except for the cancellation of my return flights to the USA. I got home by getting another ticket, but will be trying to get some reimbursement. The Lord helped me push on despite a tenacious cold all 3 weeks. It was nice to escape the cold American winter!

### Service Center

Service Center director Richard Karima and Inventory Officer Emily Jumbale were able to give me good feedback on how it is going. They well grasp the crucial role they play in seeing that the distribution and return of student lessons from across Kenya goes smoothly. (see 'Feedback' below). It was gratifying to see Emily resplendant over how much she loves her job now that there is plenty of work to do. She actually has to call in extra help at times, either from the preacher students there at IPCM or from Shadron, who comes over from Koma Rock to help when needed. I reviewed with Emily aspects of the inventory reporting and observed how Emily interacts with the recruiters who send in student lessons. I was very impressed with how she has grown into this role.



Emily (right) and Shadron in the WBS Inventory office

### Campaigns



Neighborhood recruiting at Mukinda

After touching base with the Nairobi Service Center and getting supplies, I flew to Kisumu and then drove 3 hours to **Busia**. The Makindu Church of Christ hosted a WBS recruitment campaign from Sunday to Tuesday. 20 campaigners from 8 congregations participated. Besides the church neighborhood, enrollment was done in 2 township centers and one Teachers Training College. Enrollment by the last day was 108, while still waiting on the count from the College.

The second campaign was hosted by the Kavingo Church of Christ in rural **Makueni** County. Seven evangelists from 5 congregation took part, but the member involvement was negligible despite the preacher stating they have 150+ members. Enrollment was done in the church neighborhood, the township and

at 2 high schools. Enrollment as of this writing had reached 169. A half-day Bible seminar was also taught using the WBS curriculum booklet, *Guide to NT Christianity*.



**WBS Recruiters and School Administrators  
at Wambiti 2dy School, Kavingo**

These two places were chosen for the campaigns because the recruiters at each have been the most consistent and productive over time and I had done no campaigns with them in person before. The numbers were not overwhelming, but at Kavingo foundations were laid for coordinated, on-going recruitment in an area WBS has not had that before. It is the home area of Bro. Douglas Kioko who has headed the Mombasa WBS team for over 2 years. He has moved home to help build up the church in the County, making WBS one of the primary tools for that.

### National WBS Conference

Perhaps the most important single stimulus for recruiter encouragement and growth is the annual National WBS Conference. This year out of 69 invited, 53 attended, representing basically every corner of Kenya. We reviewed essential approaches and procedures in doing WBS recruiting, lesson collection and return, and delivery of next lessons. This year emphasis was placed on targeting where recruitment is done and scheduling for effective follow up so as to ensure as many enrollees as possible progress through as many courses as is possible, as timely as possible.



**53 attend the Kenya National WBS Conference**

Despite using Ocean Bridge and its prototype for over 2 years now in Kenya, there are still incidents of students not getting their next courses in a timely manner or at all. There is great improvement over the past, but this is still what recruiters report as the greatest “challenge” or obstacle they face. The second is not having sufficient funds for transportation (or other compensation).

## First Ever Online-Student Follow Up Seminar



**82 attend the follow up seminar for online students at Kayole South Secondary School**

I have wanted for years to invite advanced online students in the Nairobi area to a follow up Bible Seminar in order to introduce them more concretely to the church of Christ and offer them teaching and opportunity for any still needing to make a decision for Christ. We used a booklet called *Steps Toward Salvation* which I have used often in recruiting campaigns in which we invited the community to a Bible class. Our seminar was

hosted by Kayole South Secondary School where there are about 200 paper students. The Koma Rock Church of Christ missions team launched recruitment there about a year ago. The Christian Union patron of the school has been very supportive, as she was for this seminar.

With the help of the WBS tech group, we sent invitations to 230 online students who had given Nairobi as their location. I had narrowed that down from over 500 by selecting those active in the last 2 years and who had done at least through the 5<sup>th</sup> course, *Born of Water and Spirit*. That was in order to be sure we did not get more participants than we could handle. I knew that a fair number would not actually be residents of Nairobi. When they register online, they are asked for their City, and to most Kenyans, the only “city” in the country is Nairobi, but it is not where they live. 36 of those invited responded that they would come, of whom 17 actually did come, but some with a “plus one.” A few paper students whom our WBS Coordinator



**More follow up seminar participants**

Joshua Ogada knew also came. Many of those who came are pastors in their denominations. About 7 members of the church attended either as part of our team of WBS representatives or from the nearby congregation of the church. The school CU Patron had asked for their students who had progressed to the second WBS course or beyond to attend, of whom we had 51, for a total attendance of 82.

The seminar was, to me, a great success. It engaged participants with thorough discussion and questions and answers. At the end, 15 of the high schoolers wanted to be baptized, but in keeping with school administration requirements and contacting the parents, the baptisms were scheduled for the following Saturday. With the constraints of time and the online-student participants needing to return far across town to go home, we had less personal interaction with them than I would have liked, but now can follow up with each one more thoroughly.

## Bible Seminar for NGCTC



**NGCTC students do dramas of conversions in Acts as part of the *Discovering NT Christianity* Seminar**

NGCS students. With a commitment by the school’s current administration to emphasize restoration principles, I hope NGCTC will become another place to build the WBS workforce of the future.

## Koma Rock Missions

My last 3 days were at Koma Rock, Nairobi, though minister Joshua Ogada and his family went with me to Rangau Church of Christ on the outskirts of Nairobi on Sunday. Koma Rock has jumped into WBS outreach with both feet, making recruiting an integral part of both local outreach and missions elsewhere, both in Nairobi and far “up-country.” They have a missions team of 4 adults and 4 youth, but local efforts involve many more from the congregation. Their team approach and example will, I hope, be a model for recruiters elsewhere.



**Meeting with elders at Rangau Church of Christ**

## Feedback & Recommendations

In anticipation of a review of the 2024 budget in March, I plan to recommend some Service Center adjustments. Emily’s pay needs to be increased. Operations costs are higher than was budgeted previously. Adding a service of delivering and picking up lessons at the 9 Nairobi bus stations is needed. I was surprised that my suggestion of a “contract” with a local motorbike driver for this delivery service was met with skepticism, mostly because of trust issues. It was decided to train and give a trial period for a known church member to take and collect the parcels, relieving Richard and Emily from that time-consuming task.

During the Nairobi WBS Conference I had a session with about 10 online Follow Up Partners and Coordinators who were present. A few are feeling overwhelmed (pressured) as they get reminders from Kami and because of the amount of work entailed in getting hold of the requested students, organizing meetings with them, sometimes costs of accomplishing those meetings, etc. Particularly troublesome are requests that are not legitimate, either from misunderstanding by Study Helpers or, in a few cases, unscrupulous WBS “recruiters”

with scamming motives. It might be good to review whether some aid (at least cell phone airtime) can be given for legitimate follow up expenses by FUPartners.

My role as “envoy” in East Africa has been very “hands on.” Few real decisions, especially financial, have been given over to the African leaders. Looking forward, it would be wise, I believe, to begin strategizing for more Kenyan leadership control, including the selection of a WBS National Director. The proposal arising at Cedar Park last year of targeting key major population centers which would eventually have their own inventory and offices (such as the Tumaini Prison work now has) may be viable if we get the correct personnel and “buy-in” by the brotherhood in those centers. I believe, however, that that plan will take up to 2 years to build up to. Another idea to consider is to increase support of an effective mobile team such as Koma Rock has initiated.