

Here We Go Again

Our main reason for going to Tanzania - **the Oral Learners Symposium** - is now complete. The General Superintendent (Archbishop) of the TAG requested we host this strategic seminar. However, this week there are two training sessions, next week a meeting with the TAG in Dar Es Salaam, and one more 3 day training before we head home.

The OLI Symposium was quite an event. Three nights and two days living in the dorms at a Tanzanian university with our 25 invited guests -- district officers from 5 districts and the TAG national missions and evangelism department personnel. As you know, the Tanzanians have few resources. So, from our missions account, we were expected to pay for the lodging, meals, coffee breaks, meeting room and some of their travel expense. Sounds daunting, doesn't it? Since YOU give and support us, you shared in it. The good news is that in the Tanzanian economy it only cost about \$2,500. Thank you!

Ruth and I will cherish the memories, testimonies, laughter, and results shared in the OLI Symposium the rest of our life. For two years we invested in Maasai evangelism and church planting and the test/pilot project was over. After a review of data and reports, the TAG formed their own national Oral Learners Initiative (OLI). The leadership mandated all 5 districts and the national missions department will have an oral learners initiative (OLI). The focus is on non-reading and poor-reading people groups. A special emphasis will be to penetrate 5 unreached people groups in Tanzania over the next two years. These tribes speak unique languages and are virtually untouched by the Gospel. They practice ancestor worship, witchcraft, animism, and more.



The highlight of the conference was testimony from three people we invited from the places we worked previously. They shared their accomplishments over the past two years since the very first OLI training. One was Pastor Joyce of Losinoni, the first woman pastor among the Maasai. It was fantastic! The group of leaders spontaneously began praising God! Another trainee, David, spoke of the great advantage of the "machine" - MegaVoice - not identifying a denomination or specific 'church' because *everyone* will listen. He said, "The machine speaks their own language, this amazes them. So they listen and feel the person speaking has authority, knowledge and should be respected - the machine more than even a person!" They think, "How did our language get on that machine?" And, "How can a woman' operate this machine?"

We showed photos of Joyce's church in Losinoni, David and ourselves teaching in the bomas. Some of the church leaders were shocked, they had no idea all this had been happening! When they saw the Losinoni church with more than 100 new believers, they knew it is nicer and more beautiful than theirs! Laughingly, they said perhaps they could trade churches with her. (Of course, knowing where it is and how difficult living is...no water, electricity, roads, shops, the violence – it was meant tongue in cheek!)

Archbishop Barnabas Mtokumboli moderated a strategic planning meeting on the second day. This kind of planning and organizing in **AFRICA**, was amazing to us. They adopted Actions Steps and Target Dates. They are on fire!



We have learned that Africans discuss everything AT LENGTH. At the end of the second day, Archbishop Mtokumboli turned to face John and asked: "My Brother, we need Gospel stories in five primitive people languages recorded and made available on the MegaVoice. Will you help us with this?"

The implications are huge! There would be perhaps two years of very intense work, raising money, frustrating communication (or lack there of!) with Africa, long hours of travel to the ends of the earth, recording in the bush, living, moving and walking by faith. Challenges of epic proportions.

If you were offered an opportunity to impact **FIVE primitive people groups** for Christ, what would you say? Could you say NO? I said, yes. So, **HERE WE GO AGAIN!**



The Datooga, one of the five tribal groups

So now the question is yours to answer. We cannot do it alone. Along with Ruth and me, the opportunity is ours: to share the Gospel with five primitive people groups. “Will you help us with this?”

Aahhh, the implications for you are huge, too! Sacrificial giving, faithful prayer, and patience in hearing results, because it won’t happen overnight!

If you know your answer **now**, please hit **reply**, and just say, ‘Yes, I’ll help!’ What an encouragement and faith builder that would be! If you don’t know your answer yet, ask the Lord of the harvest what He would have **you** do. When we get back to the USA, we will get in touch with you about the details of your involvement. We anticipate a cost of about +/- \$6,000 for each language – a total of \$30,000 for all.

On a personal note. There is a proverb that says: You get what you pay for.

I don’t know what you imagined about the university dorms, but if I describe it, you will know why it was so cheap! We used sugar with ants in it for our tea and coffee. There was no electricity most of the time. No Internet, no hot water, a shared bathroom, and we slept together in one single bed! (you never get too old to enjoy cuddling)

Was it worth it? You bet it was!