



Jeff's Journal

APRIL, 2006

Greetings to you from a land of great suffering and great hope. Wisdom and lessons from the Book of Job can find broad application in Kenya today.

Along with four other East African countries, Kenya is still working her way through one of the worst droughts to hit this region in decades. In Nairobi where I am, we have recently had some fairly substantial rains and the grassy areas in the outlying areas are once again quite green. This has reduced the need for Maasai tribesmen to bring their cattle herds into the metropolitan area looking for grazing spots on the highway easements and creating traffic chaos.

While the blessing of rain is much welcomed in Nairobi, very large parts of the country to the east and north are still dry and suffering. *Many* have lost 95% of their herds of goats, sheep and cattle and images of starved cattle and camel carcasses lying thick on the land is a common item in the newspapers here. Please pray that suffering for millions in East Africa will soon end through God's providence. The Church has played a very active role in bringing relief in the Muslim-dominated areas where much of the drought devastation has occurred.

I recently had the privilege of accompanying an African friend to Dar es Salaam, the capital of Tanzania, where he was presiding over a quite large conference of Christian pastors who had come for church planting envisioning and training. As is common in this culture, I was asked to greet the gathering of 400+ and did so with a bit of trepidation, since it happened only 5 minutes after I had walked through the door. Shaken, but happy for that to be the limit of my involvement (I had come as an observer), I retreated to my chair along the side of the conference hall. That evening my friend asked if I would lead a training session the next day on any church planting subject of my choosing. I very much dislike public speaking and had not attended the meeting for this reason at all. Once again the Lord gave me grace the next day while I made 400 new friends sharing with them some of the fundamental elements that help this church planting thing to work.

This conference was just one example of new initiatives of national church planting and evangelism movements that have sprung up all across Africa in the past 5 or 10 years. Through FTT (Finish The Task), Mark Dye and I were recently honored to be a part of hosting a 5-day continental consultation that brought together representatives from 33 African nations and 14 non-African countries where similar initiatives are occurring. The purpose of the consultation was for gaining encouragement, new ideas, fresh vision and the kind of synergy that comes from discussion by ones all called to the same purpose. With a church planting focus, the consultation was *about* Africa and *for* Africa, solidifying the establishment of the Movement for African National Initiatives (MANI). The next such conference is to be five years from now. Please join with us in praying for the spiritual health and vitality of this movement which seeks to advance the purposes of God through the discipling of nations.

I remain humbled and grateful to be a part of God's work among Kenyans. In the meantime, He is working out His best in my life, as well. *Thank you for the role you play in changing hearts for His kingdom.*

For the Cause of Christ in Kenya,

Jeff

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