

**Report of the 2013 Mission Trip**  
**October 14–23, 2013**  
**Suswa County, Kenya**

Prepared by  
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God continues to use us as missionaries to magnify and glorify His name. We continue to praise God for the awesome work He allows us to do. In addition, we continue to see the expansion of the team members from various locations around the country that are drawn to this work because of the difference it makes in the lives of individuals and churches. This year our team was joined by Ms. Jessica Sims, who is the first full time missionary assigned to work in Kenya by the Virginia Baptist State Convention. She is a member of the Mount Zion Baptist Church in Arlington, Virginia where Dr. Leonard N. Smith is Senior Pastor. She will live and work in Kenya for 12 months and can renew her contract at the end of the term.

We are grateful for partners around the country who support this work financially and through their prayers. A detailed financial report will be prepared and will be distributed upon its completion. We praise God for the kind of support that makes missions possible.

Our work and partnership is with the Baptist Convention of Kenya, which consist of more than 2 583 churches throughout the nation, organized by geographical regions. The convention is currently in a re-organizational phase, as they expand the number of regions due to growth in the number of churches joining the convention. We are convinced that our work in Kenya since 2008 has had a major impact on the growth, strength, and expansion of the work by the BCOK and our partnership with them.

This is the final report with some of the highlights of our recent trip to an area known as Suswa County. Suswa Country of Kenya is inhabited by the Masai Tribal group one of the smallest and poorest tribes in Kenya. They earn their living by tending and selling cattle, sheep, and goats. The tribe lives in an area known as the

Great Rift Valley, which is a mixture of climates that range from semi-arid to near desert like conditions. Many of the Masai people cannot read nor write English or Kiswahili, the national language. We hope to begin a language school in these areas soon. There were only two seminary graduates in the whole county.

One of the areas of concern prior to departure was the recent airport fire in August and the terror attack at the Westgate Mall in Nairobi in September. Security is always our number one concern and our first priority on any short-term trip. Our team experienced neither unusual security concerns nor travel delays. We were not threatened in any way.

The accommodations for our team at the Seasons Hotel in Narok, Kenya were more than adequate and provided a safe and secure environment for lodging, meals, and mission operations. The hotel provided free Wi-Fi services, which enabled team members to post updates to Facebook and to use Skype and other face-to-face communication platforms. The hotel staff was very courteous and worked hard to meet our every need.

Logistic operations handled by Good Hope Travel, Ltd, headquartered in Nairobi. The staff of Good Hope is always helpful and provides first class service during our trips. We have worked with this organization for 7 years and find them to be an extremely reliable company to do business. Good Hope Travel, Ltd  
Nairobi, Kenya

Mr. Patrick Ngotho, President, and Principal Owner  
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We had one team member, Bobbi Floyd who was unable to travel due to medical reasons. However, she was instrumental in collecting hundreds of pairs of glasses and two cases of Bibles that were distributed during the trip.

This year Rev. Walter Solomon managed the day-to-day operations of the trip and did a commendable job in keeping everyone and everything on task. Included in this report are the various reports from other team members. Each of the teams did an

exceptionally great job in their assigned areas. The medical team was outstanding and treated hundreds of patients over the four-day period of operations. Each of the teams was given the latitude to organize themselves and the resources available to them to best accomplish the mission.

Our team spent five days in this area, working at four different sites—Inkoirienito Baptist Church Centre (Wednesday), Oloirowua Baptist Church Centre (Thursday), Enaramati Baptist Church Centre (Friday), and at Olorilopil Baptist Church Centre Saturday). Our team held training session for more than 500 church leader's at all four sites. On Sunday, team members were split up among various churches in Suswa County where they preached and gave words of inspiration.

We arrived in Kenya with more than 2,200 pounds of medicine, books, Bibles, children's games, and other materials. In addition, this was in addition to the medical supplies, which were purchased in Kenya. The team consisted of twenty-eight persons from Virginia, Georgia, Alabama, Nebraska, and New York. There was one medical doctor, a pharmacist, four registered nurses, and several other medical staff persons. The team treated 2,278 patients during the course of the four days. This does not include the more than 1,980 school age children who had a variety of common childhood conditions, such as worms and other conditions. The team visited and did ministry at four primary schools with a total enrollment of 2,100 students (this is another story all by itself). The medical team performed two field operations and overall did a superior job in their work treating and assisting the people.

## **Team Members and their Assignments**

### **Mission Team Leaders**

Dr. Geoffrey V. Guns, Mission Team Leader

Rev. Walter L. Solomon, Assistant Mission Team Leader, and Trip Manager

### **Medical Team**

Dr. Clyde Green, M.D. Team Leader

Dr. Samson Nkamasiai, M.D. (Indigenous team member)

Dawn Erb, RN

Shirley Berry, RN

Cheryl Davis, RN

Johnnie Smith Junior

Cheryl Green

### **Pharmacy and Patient Registration Team**

Dr. Cornell Jones, Pharm. D.

Jessica Sims

Willie Smith, RN

Cathleen Parchment, RN

### **Sunday School/Christian Education Teaching Team**

Gloria Epps, Team Leader

Linda Ann Wormley

Tierney Bentley

Fannie Harrison

### **Youth and Young Adults**

Shaesa Lewis, Team Leader

Pauletta Brown

### **Deacons and Deaconesses Ministry Team**

Rev. Isaiah Ellison, Team Leader

Rev. Robert Dawson

Approximately 10 deacons and 2 deaconess participated on Wednesday, no deacons/deaconess' participated on Thursday, 21 deacons on Friday, and 17 deacons on Saturday for an approximate total of 50 deacons and deaconess being served.

Rev. Ellison spoke to the group concerning the spiritual and moral qualifications of deacons and deacon's wives, practical duties, the selection process, and the need for continuing education and training. Rev. Dawson spoke to the group from the Bible Study Guide on the meaning of submission and obedience to Christ in performance of duties.

We discovered that most of the deacons in this Masai region had no formal education, were unable to read and write, and that there were very few opportunities for education or training available to them.

Fortunately, the Chief of the district is also a Deacon. Therefore, we suggested that he speak with the Bishop and Pastors in the region about the need for training the deacons. In addition, since the Chief is a former educator, we recommended that he lead the group in establishing and implementing monthly or quarterly training opportunities in the areas mentioned above. I agreed to provide him with an email or scan a copy of a Deacon Training Handbook that could be used for this purpose.

The deacons and deaconess' asked many questions involving the use of alcohol, having more than one wife, how to best assist the pastor and members, the qualifications to become a deacon, etc. All of the questions presented were answered using basic biblical principles, which each participant could apply to their particular situation. Rev. Dawson and I preached, prayed, answered questions, gave testimonials, and provided words of encouragement to the deacons and deaconess. In addition, Bibles and the Bible Study Guide on Submission and Obedience were given to all participants, until we ran out.

There is so much more that I could say about all of the things we saw and observed during this Mission opportunity. Unfortunately, time and space will not allow me to elaborate on all those things at this time.

I want to take this opportunity to thank you for the wonderful work that you do and for providing us with the opportunity to be a part of it. May God continue to bless and keep you and the work that you do. In addition, we are already looking forward to next year's Mission Work.

**Pastors Teaching Team**

Dr. Edgar Williams

Dr. Geoffrey V. Guns

Rev. Melvin Cotton

I along with Dr. Edgar Williams, Jr. and Rev. Melvin Cotton did most of the teaching with the pastors and their wives. We distributed over one hundred and fifteen Bibles, of which 15 were study Bibles. We are limited in the amount of resources that we can physically carry, but the Study Bibles were a huge hit and many of the pastors and people desperately wanted them. Our team provided training materials in ministry and leadership to the pastors and their wives. We also gave each pastor and his wife a small financial contribution to bless their lives. The amount was 1000 Shillings for the pastors and 2,000Shillings for their wives.

**Women's Ministry Team**

Sherry Jackson-Ellison, Team Leader

Rev. Linda Fox Suiter

Bobbi Floyd

Jimi Thomas

The Women's Ministry Team had about 300 participants in our sessions and we tried to reach out to the women who were preparing the daily meals. As most of the women in our groups were already believers, our goal was to help, encourage, support, and reinforce Christian values.

The morning sessions involved teaching, preaching, and personal engagement of the participants through stories, skits, and demonstrations about Christian principles. The afternoon sessions included practical living advice such as healthcare information (breast care demonstrations, nutrition, and hydration) provided by the RNs, and marketing strategies provided by Rev. Dr. Edgar Williams, Retired Professor of Business Management at Norfolk State University. We also distributed 100 blankets to women with babies, 100 dresses, 100 prayer journals, 100 pens and

about 100 pairs of socks. In addition, all four interpreters were given individual bags of goodies for themselves and their families.

Thank you for the wonderful opportunity to work with the women. As you know, we always feel that we received more blessing in helping than we were able to give to the Masai women. We look forward to the journey again next year.

### **Children's Ministry Teaching Team**

Jesus said, "Let the little children come to me, and do not hinder them, for the kingdom of heaven belongs to such as these" (Matthew 19:14 NIV). During our time in Kenya, God reminded me of this familiar Bible verse at each mission site. In addition, yes, the children came, and in numbers which surpassed last year's mission trip. They blessed us with their smiles, hugs, laughter, and humble spirits and reminded us that children are the same everywhere.

What a wonderful and blessed opportunity the 2013 Kenya Mission Children's Ministry Team (12 years and younger) experienced and shared as we ministered to the Masi children. Please accept the following report from our fantastic team, which included the following "Sisters on a Mission for God's Kingdom Kids":

#### Children's Ministry 12 years & under

Sarah Bland

Tierney Bentley-Hunt

Lynn Brown

#### Youth Ministry 13 years & older

Pauletta Brown

Shaesa Lewis

Our classroom location each day was outdoors in the dusty, dry, hot fields of grass covered in cow/sheep/goat manure. However, despite the conditions members of our team did not complain or grumble.

"God Loves Me" was the title of the children's Bible lesson and the Bible verse was John 3:16. The youth ministry team prepared a different lesson. Included in each of our sessions was the teaching of two songs related to our lesson, He's Got the Whole World in His Hands and Jesus Loves the Little Children. During the teaching session, to illustrate the objective that God loves and cares for the Masi children and people all over the world, we used two world globe balls that we blew up with a pump to visually show the children where Kenya and the United States is located and that God created the entire world and all people. As we taught the song, He's Got the Whole World, we held the globe balloon in our hands and allowed the children to hold the world globes in their hands. The globe balloons were also used during playtime as well.

Statistically, the number of children and teens we ministered to played and fellowshiped with during the four days of mission work was and still is unbelievable. As a team, we were in awe as God allowed each of us to be creatively used by Him in ways none of us could ever imagine. Our teaching method was very simple, break the children into small manageable groups, keep the lesson simple, fun, positive, upbeat and play lots of games that kept the children moving. The teachers/interpreters were a big help in management control of the children, for we would not have been successful without their assistance.

Hats off to Tierney who was asked on the third day of mission to lead a teaching session all by herself with children at the church who did not attend school. She was separated from our group where we taught the children at their school. Tierney did an awesome job teaching more than 30+ children!

We are proud to report that we ministered to more than 2000 Masai children and 16 teachers/interpreters. Donations to all four sites included the following:

- One large multi-colored parachute to play outdoor games
- 25-30 binoculars
- 25-30 outdoor compasses
- 200 pencils and 50 pens



10 pencil sharpeners  
1 large box of pencil erasers  
8 large packs of ruled notebooks  
15 composition notebooks  
5 packs of crayons  
5 packs color pencils  
  
50 rulers  
25 t-shirts  
50 Elastic multi- colored head- bands  
  
Large bag of flip-flops (number unknown)  
And lots of sweets for everyone!

One of the most memorable sites our team experienced occurred on the last day of mission, Saturday, October 19. When the vans arrived, we noticed 50-60 school children standing near the school. After worship and as we walked around the white tent headed to our teaching site, one by one we were overwhelmed by the sight of children and teens dressed in purple carrying plastic chairs across the field from the school to the church! Hundreds of children appeared out of nowhere, it was a beautiful sight. Sarah Bland two days earlier came up with a term that accurately describes what we saw and experienced each day, "The Nation of Kidzlam"- God's Kingdom Kidz. There is so much more to share about our mission work, that time or space will allow me the opportunity to do so. Therefore, I end our report with, "To God Be the Glory for the THINGS He has Done."

We thank God for Dr. Guns and the opportunity to serve the children of Kenya and we thank God for the wonderful, gifted team members who labored in love with each other.

### **Challenges We Face**

1. Financial resources. We continue to be limited by finances, yet we have been able to fund the work of these short-term trips through free will gifts. We would like to be able to provide more substantive support and programs, but a greater pool of money will be needed to achieve those goals.
2. Education and Seminary training for local pastors. The federal government of Kenya has mandated that pastors attend seminary in order to be recognized by the state. There is a Baptist seminary but money is needed to assist more pastors in getting an education.
3. Language barriers. We need to continue to give due diligence to helping our team members become more fluent in the local language. One strategy has been to use audio tapes that give some familiarity with the local language.
4. Increasing the number of local churches and pastors who will invest time and resources in expanding and supporting the work in Kenya.

### **Future Trip Dates**

January 21–29, 2014 Tanzania– Exploratory and preparation for October 2014

October 13–23, 2014 First trip to Tanzania (arrive back in USA on October 24).

January 19–28, 2015- Meru and Mount Kenya Region

I want to thank you for the continued faithfulness and commitment to the work of missions and to the Baptist Convention of Kenya in particular. God is continuing to lift the veil of ignorance and darkness through your prayers, financial support, and willingness to partner with God and other believers who share our passion for mission work in Africa.

**Pastor Guns**