

## **March, 2009**

### **...News From and About Kenya**

#### **Leaders and Congregations**

The church leaders continue to meet monthly to pray, study God's Word, encourage each other, and plan for the future. They reported 12 conversations this month. Famine is still a major concern. Another \$1000 for famine relief has been sent. Money has also been sent to complete the purchase of land for the Mwangya and Kivaki congregations where they plan to build their church buildings. The Zombe congregation was sent money to repair the brick lining of their hand dug well and to install iron sheets on the roof of their new classroom. They are thankful for the sewing machines we provided and more ladies are learning to sew. The Kavonge congregation is preparing to plant 200 Eucalyptus tree seedlings on their property. Money was sent to help their youth continue with their community development projects.

#### **Digging the Well**

Erastus reports the weather is very hot. They are preparing to plant the next crop because he says at the end of very hot weather generally there is heavy rainfall. The hand digging of the well on the school property continues. At this point it is 10 feet in diameter and 20 feet deep. They are currently digging through solid rock at the rate of 1 foot per week. The good news is the rock is wet and when they penetrate the rock layer, the digging will be easy. They plan to dig the well 60 feet deep.

#### **Student Sponsorship Program**

The student sponsorship program continues to make a great impact on the lives of the students, their families, and the church. Currently 57 students are being sponsored and we are looking for 4 more families to sponsor the remaining students. Several students and family members have been brought to Christ as a result of this program.

#### **Mobile Medical Clinic**

James continues to operate the mobile medical clinic providing health care. The poor nutrition during times of famine increases the health problems. As an example of the affect of the mobile clinic, James provided treatment and an operation for a lady with a goiter. By meeting this physical need an opportunity to share the Gospel was created. She and her son are now Christians.

#### **Grant Proposal Update**

Healing Hands International in Nashville is interested working with us on the agricultural community development projects. They are interested in a partnership with us, Nairobi Great Commission School, and our Kenyan brothers and sisters. They would help with the agricultural development of our school land and teach agriculture to men who are preparing to preach. The preachers could then teach survival gardening and drip irrigation in their community as an outreach tool. The Bell Trust Foundation met Tuesday March 3<sup>rd</sup>. They were not able help with the work in Kenya. It will be this summer before we know whether Betenough Homes will be able to provide any funding for the work in Kenya.

### **One Laptop Per Child Project**

In February I spoke to a group of students at the University of Illinois who were interested in international business and volunteerism. This week three of those students who are members of student chapter of “Entrepreneurs without Borders” came asking for help with a grant proposal. Their “One Laptop Per Child” grant proposal was originally planned for Liberia but because of medical and safety concerns they seeking a different location. They are requesting that a school in Kenya be the focal point of their grant. It would be great if our secondary school was ready to open. In the meantime Erastus and I are identifying a school that could be included in the grant proposal. If this grant is approved we are hopefully that in the future our own secondary school can be included in the project. The computers are cranked to power them. They can assess the internet through cell phone towers and they come with several software programs. If approved their grant would bring a server, 100 laptop computers, and 10 weeks of computer training to Kenya.

### **Jatropha Tree Project**

We are working with My Dream Fuel Co. in Florida and the World Bank to take Jatropha tree seedlings to Kenya. We are working out the details for them to get new improved Jatropha varieties to Kenya. The new varieties yield up to 8 times more oil than wild varieties. 18 months after the seedlings are planted the trees will produce their first crop of seeds. The trees produce for up to 50 years. Jatropha trees are resistant to drought and pests. Their seeds contain 40% oil which can be pressed out for making bio-diesel. Jatropha trees yield up to 10 times the amount of oil as other organic oil sources used for bio-diesel. When the oil is extracted from the seeds the remaining pulp called “cake” is a source of organic matter that is full of nitrogen compounds. When the “cake” is added to poor soil in 4 to 5 years it becomes suitable for growing agricultural crops. The Japanese government in building a Jatropha seed processing plant near the Thika market. The processing plant will be 50 miles from Erastus and the people of the Kavonge congregation. The potential to provide a sustainable cash crop on the mountainside in an arid climate utilizing poor quality soil is exciting. These trees will provide income even in times of famine.

### **Prayer Request**

The results from the grant proposals and the Jatropha tree project will determine the timing of the next mission trip to Kenya. We request your continued prayers for God’s people in Kenya and this mission effort.