

Kenya

Rich In Faith

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Today it's going to be story telling time. I want to give a report concerning my recent trip to Kenya.

So today we're going on a safari, we're going to be crossing what some call: "**The Big Lake**" referring to the "Atlantic Ocean". We're going to travel over to what others call: "**The Big Island**" referring to the "continent of Africa."

We're traveling to Kenya today, located in "Horn of Africa", along the Indian Ocean. Kenya's Geography is located in E. Africa, bordered on the North by Somalia, the home of the "Sea Pirates" that we hear about from time to time. (Hijacking Ships for ransom.)

Bordered North West by Uganda, where so many children in the North were stolen and forced into becoming rootless military soldiers. (And forced to kill innocent peasant farmers during their training.)

Then "Rwanda" Where the genocide of 1994 took place, when the world turned its back, while approximately one million Tutsi's (one of the two ethnic groups of that country) were slaughtered, by the Hutu's.

And there's Tanzania on the other side of Kenya, and Lake Victoria (2nd largest fresh water lake in the world.) where the number one killer of visitors to that part of the world, resides (The Hippopotamus) (2nd largest killer of visitors is pedestrians, hit by automobiles.)

(In that part of the world, automobiles have the right of way, not pedestrians.)

Africa's a rough place. Some say Hell has seized parts of the continent. In recent times thirty-one out of Africa's fifty-three countries were suffering civil war or serious civil disturbances. Hundreds of thousands of people died (But Get This) not from bullets, but from hunger, bad water and disease.

Three conditions that still plague all of our brethren living there today; they battle "Hunger" "Bad water" and "Disease, on a daily basis.

But ya know, amid Africa's wars and man-made famines and plagues, Africans are a happy people rising gloriously above conditions that would break most of us. Even in the worst of times you do not hear the tones of doom and despair, but instead, the tone of Hope.

And in the midst of all this, the Gospel, The Good News of the Kingdom of God is being preached, and hearkened to by many in that part of the world. We continue to have constant baptisms over there. Existing groups continue to grow, and new groups continue to rise up. To go there is much like stepping 2,000 years back in time. (Aside from the "cell phones") There's also "The Great Rift Valley" that passes through Kenya, and if you follow it, it will lead you directly to the Promised Land...

Now what I have to report today, is going to be a bit repetitious to some, because what I have to say is the same story that I have been telling ever since my first trip to E. Africa back in 2005. It's a story about some of the "richest" people in the world... who have something very valuable to offer each and every one of us.

O, I'm not talking about material wealth. (when it comes to "trivial material wealth" the Kenyan's are amongst the poorest people in the world. Their material possessions consist mainly of a few pots & pans for cooking, some worn out plastic jugs for collecting water, and a mattress and possibly a wooden bed frame for sleeping. But when it comes to their "Faith" there amongst the richest in the world "Rich in Faith" that is. And I believe "wealthier" by far, than what most Americans could currently comprehend.

Their faith reminds me of what Christ's half brother James said, concerning having respect for "materially wealthy people" and despising the poor. James reminds us that God has "chosen" the "poor" of this world, those who are "rich in faith" and heirs of the Kingdom. There is so much that we can learn from our impoverished African Brethren, the problem is that my story (more often than not) falls on deaf ears & blind eyes.

I also want to address today, how the Gospel is being spread in that part of the world right now. (With many being called, many being baptized.) Let us not forget, that one of the commissions of the church is go into all the world (even unto the uttermost parts we are told) and teach all nations (even every creature, according to the Gospel of Mark) to baptize them, and teach them to observe all things whatsoever Christ has commanded. (That important commission has not ended yet.)

Christ also told His disciples that He would be with them as they carried out that commission, "*even unto the end of the age*" Well, the age has not ended yet brethren, and that important commission that has been given to the church, still needs to be fulfilled, still need to be addressed. How do I know this? How do I know that God is still calling people? I know this because I see people getting their eyes opened for the first time, having that "first love" energize their being, like it did for many of us when we were first called.

The church of God in Kenya is very much alive and active, and I hope my story today will help us to not only become more aware of this, but also become more involved in what God has us doing over there. (I say us, because many of us here on this "phone hook-up" are involved, some, without even being aware. Our teachings are producing fruit... many of the sermons that have been given by the various speakers on this "phone hook-up" have been circulated amongst the various groups over there..... It moves a bit slow, because it takes funds to make copies of the messages; it takes funds to distribute them. And funds are always low, because (sad to say) very few contribute...

Sad to say, very few seem to realize the drier conditions that people living in 3rd world countries have to endure. How there are times that our impoverished brethren over there even have to ration their food.

Now I might need some help with the chapter & verse to a couple of Passages that I might allude to today, but not sure where there at. Like the story of Jeremiah when he was locked up in a cesspool.

I used to think that being trapped in a cesspool was unique to Jeremiah, but I've come to realize that there are others who are also living in a cesspool. I visited one last week in Nairobi Kenya. I kept my last Sabbath at our Slum School in Nairobi. The living conditions at the slum have deteriorated significantly. (I've never seen it as bad as it is right now.)

Our school currently has over 73 registered students. It's also where the Nairobi brethren meet for Sabbath services; (most of whom live in the slum, or nearby.) You might remember how we helped that congregation numerous times over the years. They were taking in Kids, Needy one and orphans; teaching them not only to read and write, but also to know their Creator.

We built a kitchen to fill Empty Bellies with Porridge. Some coming to school with no breakfast & and nothing for lunch. George Otara (our school Administrator) recently told me he can't remember the last time the children had porridge, because there been no funds to purchase the ingredients.

Conditions have worsened, the slum is just horrible now, most of the streets are wet & muddy from the overflowed open street sewers. The stench is overwhelming in some places. George was in hospital recently (deadly sick) for quite some time.... They said he (along with quite a few others from that slum) contracted some kind of deadly disease, and probably just from breathing the contaminated air.

I also visited Georges other home in Western Kenya where he also has a congregation..... He could move his family there where it is much cleaner & easier a life, but they are dedicated to the many people (including many children) that the school is helping. But more on that later, because I didn't visit the Nairobi congregation until the end of my trip.....

So let me begin at the beginning. People often ask me: "When will you be going back to Kenya?" "No clue" Things always just seem to fall into place for my trips... Including this trip which was so abrupt... I didn't even know I was going till a couple a weeks before I went. Everything very rapidly fell into place for the trip...

As the spring Holy Days approached, My wife & I couldn't seem to decide whether she was going to come to NJ to keep Passover/Unleavened Bread with me, or if I was going to go to SC, to keep it there with her. (Uncontrollable family circumstances has caused my wife and I to live apart from one another, although we do get to visit each other quite often.) But this year, as Spring HD approached, no plane reservations were made. Then airline prices skyrocketed because of Easter week, so that left her in SC and me in NJ to keep Passover alone. It got me thinking about a possible Kenya trip. And as I began to look at the possibility, everything fell into place.

Biggest challenge was Funds. I was saving for a trip to Kenya (Like I always do) but funds were not sufficient, considering what I normally pay. And let me mention here (and this is not a pat on back) I've always use my own funds to fly to Kenya, (bar one) when a man named Joe Pickens from New Zealand paid one time, when I wasn't going to go because I lacked the funds, Joe offered to pay. God has blessed me with a good business, for going on 30 years I've owned & operated a very prosperous "Garage Door" business.

This trip was no different. At first, I didn't think I had saved enough But when I began checking rates, I found a great deal that I could afford. (And seats were still available) So I booked it. Little did I know at the time the importance of the trip. (More about that in a bit.)

So I stuffed two suitcases, 50 lbs. each. Flew into Nairobi, but never left the Airport... (Nairobi is very dangerous place.... And also very congested with the "Jam") (They kidnap Americans there for ransom.) Been followed, almost mugged, and close to having my hotel room invaded at least once..... (As I barricaded the door.) like I said, it's a dangerous place (Even the American Embassy in Nairobi closes at 2 in the afternoon, to ensure that their people get home before dark.)

Landed Nairobi in the morning and flew back out in the afternoon to Kisumu in Western Kenya... Where I met up with Evans Ondazi.....(Been working with him for about 2 years now, very energetic man) He's on the Web site, with many pix & updates...

1st stop Kisumu Nakomat – like Walmart. All goods from China.

(As usual) Filled a cart with “beans”, “Popcorn”, “soap”, “flour” and some wine for the Passover. This would be the only full grocery store for a while, and much better prices than in the little villages (and a large selection of good)

Always try to purchase for the brethren some foods that will improve their physical health.... They don't eat much of a variety, fact first week in Western Kenya it was “Rice” & bananas each day, and not just once a day, but breakfast, lunch & supper....

Hired a car to Masaba, Kenya Ondazi's place (about a 3 hour ride, then about ¾ hour on foot to his house.

This trip included much more walking than ever before, and much Motorbike taxis. Most of the first week we were visiting groups in areas where there are no cars, only motorbikes.

(I even met a lady along the trail who never saw a white man before.)

Arrived at Ondazi place in Masaba and started with a prayer.... That's the norm in Kenya. When arriving someone's house (or leaving) 1st thing everyone does is Pray.

Paul told Thessalonians to pray without ceasing.... The Kenyan do just that...

(Probably All 3rd world brethren)

One minister said that was impossible to do... (But It just means not to pray “Intermittently” like most do. Most only pray when in a fox hole, when some tragedy or trial arises. (Intermittent) But those who are close to their God pray all the time.

Now the church group at Masaba (like most of the church groups over there, have a project) (In Masaba, its brick making project) I have some good pictures & videos showing the brick making process.

Ondazi household is a busy one, he has 3 children, and is also raising his Orphaned Nephew, his brother died couple of years ago. Also has another orphan he is caring for (even putting him through school with funds he is raising from the bricks.)

He also has another orphan.... Douglas Ogendo Johnson Age 12, wanting to move in with him. (Maybe you saw pictures & story about him on our Web site?)

A Family in Origen did, and they are trying to assist and make that move happen.

Currently Douglas is living quite remotely in another part of Kenya all alone...

(And in a dangerous place, deep in the bosh with dangerous wild animals around.) KHOH did help him after his parents died, with some basic needs.

(I met Douglas at his remote home, and have a picture of him)

(Aside from wanting to move to Evans place, Douglas is requesting a Solar lamp... (he likes to read) they cost around \$10. To us, it may seem to be a trivial amount, but to our impoverished brethren, it's beyond reach.)

Hey, I got a text from Harron (Another one I've been working with) just yeaterday,,, he was telling me how an Orphan came to him yesterday looking for help, he gave him his lunch because the kid was starving. Kenya is full of Orphans, seems that everyone in the church is caring for & raising some. Richard Lyoa from Ndhiwa has around 8.

We kept Passover at Masaba with around 15 brethren.... Some traveled a long distance to keep it with us, for some, it was their 1st, Passover. For sleeping, they added some mattresses on the floor. Kept 1st day UB there under some shade we built or funded 2 years ago.

The following day we began our travels. The first area we traveled to didn't have any Matato's or vehicles,,,,, only Motor bikes, so I spent countless hours 3rd back on Motor bike Taxi, and countless hours walking..... Some places even the Motor bikes couldn't access. Some places we had to cross a river (no bridge) just had to walk across.. I fell in one. I also came quite close to a very red snake.

Now depended on who we were addressing, determined what I spoke about. Some groups were long time Sabbath keepers, other groups were totally new in the Faith. All my messages were plain & simple. Spoke about how "Shade" was not a church.

Now I mentioned earlier that there was more importance to this trip than I originally realized, reason being was due to a man by the name of "Bob Thiel."

As some of you might know, Bob Thiel visited Kenya recently, Bob was a minister I think for Rod Meredith over at Living church, but started his own organization a while back. Well he recently traveled to Kenya, and during his three day visit, he preached & taught everything that I'm so very much against.

(He spoke the same old "party line" that his group are the "Philadelphians" God "little flock". And that all one has to do to be on board with God, is join his "Continuous cog.")

Well his visit actually turned out to be a good thing. (He arranged to bring in all the leaders from every area, so what he had to offer, spread fast and wide.) It was like a worldwide that swept through and shook all the loose fruit off of the tree, but it left the sound (for lack of a better word) the matured fruit, steadfast fruit (if you will) still on the tree,,,,, and left the "other fruit" more pronounced then ever before.

(It was a very good thing for me to be in Kenya as the dust settled from Bob's trip, because many were confused.... And many were being lied to, and told that bill Goff & Bob Thiel were working together. It was even reported that I helped finance Bob's trip to Kenya..... But nothing could be further from the truth, and God worked it out that I was there to try and set the story straight, and end the confusion.

Let's stop here for a moment, and go to 1 John 2 please, because there's a false concept in the church that needs to be addressed.

As the "incorporated" church of God groups continue to split, many in God's church are quite confused. And some are thinking that all the splinters are going to unite, and come together into one big "organization."

(Some are looking for another WWC, as if everyone was of one mind or accord back then.)

Some incorrectly think that God is going to bring His "Big Flock" of believers together into one "Organization". Some are waiting for God to "wake up" and take action. They think God is going to somehow squeeze 300+ divided splinter groups into 1 group, His group. (When He wakes up of course, and takes action.)

Little do they realize that "God doesn't sleep" that He's wide awake, and in total control at the Helm.

1 John 2:19 *"They went out from us, but they were not of us, if they had been of us, they would have continued with us, but they went out, that they might be made manifest, that they were not all of us."*

God's flock is not a "big flock", its a "little flock" and every now and then, another big wind comes along effecting God's church, like the watering hole effected Gideon's army.

(Those who were scared, those who were not of the right mind, those who were not "circumspect" separated, and left.

Some still think that bigger numbers are needed; but God thinks differently, and all this splintering, it's just another shaking of God's tree, manifesting those who are of a different mind, than the mind of Christ.

Some picture Christ, sitting at the right hand of His Father (maybe slumbering or sleeping up there.)

(Again, nothing could be further from the truth.)

Brethren, Christ is not the one slumbering or sleeping, it's His lukewarm Laodicean church that is wallowing around in that poor condition.

(Christ is busy knocking, trying to get us to open the door and let Him in.)

When Stephen was martyred, Christ was Not sitting up there at the Father's throne, He was standing up on that sea of glass, almost making eye contact with Stephen as He was being stoned to death.)

Christ never sat back down after that day, remember, He still building His church, His Ecclesia, (US) Still quite busy, cleaning us up, and scrubbing us down, create in us those pure hearts that we so desperately need.)

(Still trying to get us, his church, to put our High calling on the front burner of our lives, of our minds.

(Sometimes living down here in Satan's world, we loose track of who we are, where we're coming from, and where were headed.

(This is another topic I spoke on while in Kenya.)

Sometimes we have to stop, and check our spiritual pulse. Remember, we are sojourners down here, this is not our Country, this is not our City, This is not our Land...

The City that we need to be looking for, looking to reside in (The one built without hands) is not here yet...

The question is: are we looking for it? Are we yearning for it? Or are we content with the here & now world in which we currently live?

(Even Impoverished Kenyans get off track a bit, and find themselves yearning to travel to the USA, more than yearning for God Kingdom to come.)

Kenyan's think USA is paradise. (and relatively speaking, in some ways it is.)

But only in mundane things..... How many here are "rich in faith"?

Let us ask ourselves, what are our priorities? What have we been mindful of (even in the past few days?)

Has it been “spiritual” things, or excessive “mundane” things? If there’s anything that my trips to Kenya has opened my eyes to, is how wrapped up we Americans are in all our material world.

Recently I visited a brother in the church here in the States who was in the process of having the largest in ground pool that I ever saw in my life, installed at his home. Now there's nothing wrong with having a pool, if it doesn't dwarf seeking first the kingdom of God, and His Righteousness.

Another brother I spoke to this past week (and happened to visit) showed me his new house. As he gave me the grand tour of all the many rooms, he kept repeating how he was now deeper in debt than ever before.

I began thinking about how when I first arrived in Western Kenya (At Evan Ondazi’s place) How they had brought me to a small 8 X 10 room that I, and a number of other brethren would be sleeping in that night. How I sat down on the one & only chair, to rest for a moment....

Then, in the midst of all the total silence, the sky open up and the rain began to pound upon the roof like a million jack hammers simultaneously in total harmony, at the same time, I began to hear a lot of activity.... Everyone had a bucket or pale in their hand trying to best position their pails to collect all the rain water that was running off the roof.

(I learned something else this past trip, I learned that I can drink rain water, and what a blessing that was because during the first week of the trip there was no bottled water to be found.)

In the past I never drank any rain water fearing becoming sick.... But this trip I had no choice, after all the Motor Bikes & miles of walking, I was so thirsty that I just began drinking it.

Our Creator is not asleep brethren, on the contrary, He’s still quite busy trying to get us to comprehend that this “Untoward” world in which we live. This blemished, rotten world in which we live. Is going to end.

Remember, it’s not going to be repaired; it’s going to be replaced. It’s going to “fall” and everyone who doesn’t come out of it,,, is going to fall with it.

Revelation 18 says: “Come out of her my people, that ye be not partakers of her sins, and that ye receive not of her plagues.

1 John 2 says: “Love not the world, neither the things in the world, for all that is in the world, the lusts of the flesh, the lust of the eyes, and the pride of life, is not of the Father, but is of the world, and the world passeth away, and the lusts there of.”

“New Living Translation” puts it like this:

And this world is fading away, along with everything that people crave. But anyone who does what pleases God will live forever.

Brethren, for us Americans, this could be quite difficult to comprehend, that this world is rotten, untoward, blemished, because we are living on an Island, quite separated from the sufferings of this world.)

Bob’s visit was appealing to many Kenyan’s, because he offered them “support” if they will join his “organization” (Yes, it was conditional support.)

For the Kenyans, support is a pretty powerful carrot, considering that many there even have to ration their food.

But receiving support was dependent on pledging allegiance. (All hierarchies demand it.)

So I spent a lot of time reminding the Kenyan brethren that there's more to life than bread, and that we cannot compromise truth, or pledge our allegiance to anyone other than God.

In my addressing the impoverished brethren, I often used hand & body gestures along with my words to try and drive some points home.

Like "mimicking" climbing a ladder, and discussing how the "corporate" world is composed of ladder climbing (same in the corporate church, right?) climbing to the top..... (Jockeying for position)

I told them God's way is much easier... To get to the top in God's world, (God's Kingdom) one must climb "down" the ladder not up.

Also spoke about how we need to be aiming for the "Bulls-eye" that our Goal needs to be "overcoming". How sinning still holds the penalty of death... O yes, Christ died in our stead, but its not: "Once saved always saved"

All 7 churches are told "to him that overcometh shall I grant this and promise that" Not to him that is just "trying" to overcome. (Just trying doesn't cut it in God's class, He's a perfectionist, He a Creator, and He's good at it.

In Kenya, the sky is magnificent.... The Stars reach all the way down to the horizon..... One night I saw this Hugh circle in the sky, right in the midst of all the billions of stars, and I asked: WOW! What is that?

Someone quickly answered and said that was the entrance to another solar system. I don't know if that is fact or not, but I did use that beautiful night sky to elaborate on How great God was at his profession of Creating.

I told them that as magnificent as the heavens are, there not God's masterpiece.

They only represent His masterpiece. That His masterpiece is us - Humans created in His very own image.

And I told them that we humans are not complete yet,,, O we are complete physically, and that creating us physically out of clay was not much of a challenge for God.

Even the entire universe was created by Him quite simply & quite quickly, by just speaking a word..... But to complete His master piece, to develop His Holy Righteous Character in each of us, that was going to take time, it was going to take a process.

A process that we are currently in. It starts at baptism & hands, and won't end for a period of seven weeks.

I spent a lot of time addressing sin..... After all it was the spring Holy Days,,,, and we're still in the spring HD season, correct? Still in it until the "Last Day" the day of Pentecost.

We spent time elaborating on where sin originates... and how to combat it

James 1:13-15 (Lets turn and read it)

Also spoke about how to combat sin by taking thoughts into captivity:

2 Corinthians 10:3-6 (Lets go there please to elaborate on one particular word "Revenge".)

That word “revenge” means retaliate... I elaborated on retaliate... like if someone steps on our Maze.....

Also discussed how Christ combated temptation with Scriptures;

(Mat 4 where Jesus was led up into the wilderness to be tempted of Satan

And how he fought off all the temptations with Scripture.

Satan said: “command the stones to be made bread – Christ said “Man shall not live by bread alone, but by every word of God.

Satan said: Cast thyself down, and the angels shall protect you. Christ said: “Thou shall not tempt the Lord thy God”

Satan said: “Fall down and worship me, and I will give you the world.

Christ said: “Get the hence Satan for it is written thou shall worship the Lord thy God only.

Then Satan left him

From there we discussed how James says: “Resist the Devil and he will flee from you.”

I spent a lot of time with each group elaborating on how it is not only “possible” for us, disciple of Christ to completely overcome and walk upright, but how it is imperative for us to do so, if we want to fulfill our calling.

I put up a mental target, and used a mental bow & arrow.

They all like the message, some (if not many) said they never realized it before how it is “compulsory” for us (the called of God, the church” to walk this earth uprightly and become totally “converted”

Many were brought up being told that Christ did it all for them.

We spoke about the “count” to Pentecost, and how the “Wave Loaves” were baked with Leaven, but not the leaven of Sin, but the leaven of God’s Holy Spirit like we are told in the parable of Mathew 13:33.

I stressed how those who were baptized, were baptized into God’s church, not bill’s VITW, or any other incorporation. And how no man can kick them out of the church bar one, themselves, if they go back to walking in their old shoes.

We didn’t skip a beat

Started in west, and it was rough, the trails & dirt roads are rough enough, but to add to it, it rained every afternoon, when caught in it, first ya run for shelter, then when the rain ends, you continue walking, but this time in mud. If your shoes are not strapped tight to your feet, they’ll come right off.

(The majority there walk without shoes) I did that also after falling in the river, but only for about an hour or so.)

As we traveled, we spoke to many about the true Gospel, and as usual everyone was “all ears”

Moving from West to the Coast region was a 14 hour bus ride... Evans sat next to a man who he discussed the Scriptures with the entire trip (The man was very enthused, and plans to meet for Sabbath services with Evans next Sabbath.

(The man pulled out his own Bible as they discussed)

I sat next to a lady teacher who was on holiday; she was born & raised Christian, but then converted to Muslim. We discussed many scriptures, and she departed with some planted seeds in her thinking.

(Funny thing, on my way home Amsterdam to NY, I sat next to a girl from Rwanda, (Neighboring country to Kenya) she spoke broken English, but she pulled out her bible and we discussed much.

I left time at every meeting for questions, and there were many.

Sadly, I did not get to visit all the groups, fact is I only reached a fraction during the short time spent there.

Their biggest needs,,,, teachings, Bibles. We did purchase and distribute many, and more are soon to be purchased and distributed.

We purchased some food supply for a number of true Widows, bought Nitrogen for the Kisii farm project (Also have a video of that farm that I'm hoping to post on the Web site.)

Another thing I stressed to each group was how no one in God's church is insignificant..... Demonstrated that with the human body. (I stress it every time to every group.)

I hope this gives you a little better picture of what our Creator has us involved in over there in E. Africa.

Back to you Dave.