

We're back from Africa. It was a very encouraging trip. We went to Kenya to prepare for upcoming crusades and that was accomplished. I'll be heading back in six (6) weeks to Kenya!!! The first crusade will be in Kitale on January 18-26, 2008. The Lord helped us reserve an incredible field with stadium seating on one side for only \$30 per night. It's the nicest field I've ever had for a crusade. The second crusade will be in Moi's Bridge on Feb. 1-9. Out of that mass e-mail you got a week ago where I asked who would want to go along with me to Kenya, three people indicated that they were interested to go with me. We'll see who can make it because time is so short.

I am so burdened for Africa. There are so many in spiritual darkness, in deep poverty, and in desolate circumstances. Thousands of people suffer with AIDS and every manner of sickness and disease. Our hearts are enflamed with vision to see Jesus change these people's lives and to bring the healing of Jesus. Above all, that hearts would be filled with the excitement of the revelation and salvation of Jesus Christ.

Thanks to those of you who prayed and to those who helped so much financially to make the last trip possible. If anyone is able to help with this upcoming trip in 6 weeks, every dollar would be so appreciated.

David Akers, who accompanied me on this recent trip, was a tremendous help. Upon his return, he wrote such a great and informative letter to his friends, that we asked him if we could forward it on to you. We thought you'd like to hear about Africa from someone else's perspective. Enjoy reading it below!

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Hello Friends and Family!

Here is a somewhat overdue report from my trip to Kenya with evangelist Bobby Martz. As most of you know we went to prepare for some upcoming crusades Bobby has planned for 2008 and though things worked out differently than expected, we were able to finalize plans for two crusades in the Kitale area and to do much of the preparation necessary in order to make those crusades successful. Let me share with you a little about Kenya.

Kenya is one of the most political countries I have ever been to, with 42 main tribes that are very different from each other. Everyone seems to be actively involved in the democracy there and have an idea what they would do if their party was elected. Much like in Britain the people vote on a national ruler every five years, and I happen to visit right at the tail-end of their big political season. Kenyan elections will be held this year in December.



Tribalism is one of the more unique challenges the church in Kenya has to face as many churches are still divided along tribal lines. The people all learn their mother language which is their tribe's unique way of communicating, and then they go on to speak Swahili and English. Almost everyone in Kenya knows some English (all their signs are in English) and most know how to converse reasonably well which made conversing there much easier.



Typical Kenyan meal—potatoes, broth, bananas

They speak British English though so if you order chips at a restaurant you will get French fries, if you really want potato chips you will have to order some crisps instead. Chicken and Chips is one of the popular meals there and is considered a treat to be able to afford.

Speaking of affording, the U.S. Dollar was trading roughly to 66 Kenya Shillings when I was there. Like many developing countries some things there are more expensive while others are much less so. For example, the afore mentioned chicken and chips cost 180 shillings or about \$2.70 – and that is at one of their nicer restaurants. Generally speaking food there is much less expensive.

The average Kenyan makes about 6,000 shillings per month (less than \$100). With that they pay rent, buy food, and pay for school (the schools there are not free) and usually have enough left over to pay for the cell phone service which it seemed to me that nearly everyone had.

Cell phones have revolutionized Kenya in the last 10 years enabling economic communication across the country. Kenya practically skipped the whole wired infrastructure stage and went straight to cell phones as the majority of houses in Kenya do not even have electricity much less a telephone line.

In order to make cell phones available to the poorest Kenyans the phone companies there have adopted an entirely pre-paid business model and even allow you to pay for more minutes on someone else's phone from another entirely unrelated phone. They also allow you to get any money you have yet to spend back from one of the agents located across the country. This change has had the effect of providing the Kenyans the ability to transfer money to one another via the cell phone so that they can pay each other with their cell phones or transfer large sums around the country nearly instantaneously.



Mother and child

Needless to say Western Union is facing some sad times there as more and more people are using cell phones to pay each other.

Internet access is also available in most of the cities as a blistering speed of 28 baud (which was pretty good back in 1983 when the movie War Games was released) but you're not likely to have the patience to use it for anything other than the most important of tasks. Forget about attaching pictures to your e-mails even at a paltry 1 shilling a minute you might spend \$2 (and over two hours) uploading a single picture.

Unlike the cell phone system, almost every other system there is poor at best. The roads are the best example. Political corruption and shady contractors have caused such a mess of the road system in Kenya that what would be a four hour trip in the U.S. will take you closer to ten hours there and when you do arrive you will be in serious need of major chiropractic care. Remember I said some things were more expensive? How about petrol that runs about \$4.50 a gallon, and with the roads as bad as they are you might be spending a lot of money to go just a little ways down the road.

We traveled by road from Eldoret to Kitale taking nearly two and a half hours to cover the 56 miles, and those were some of the better roads I was told. Fortunately we didn't need to transport the crusade equipment by road as we found it secure and in good condition

Speaking of which – the trip turned out to be much different than we anticipated. We had originally planned to move the equipment from Kitale to Nairobi in preparation for upcoming crusades in that area but it didn't seem as though the crusades were coming together around Nairobi fast enough to plan them for this upcoming year. At the same time, the area surrounding Kitale seemed ready for crusades and the church in that area responsive to the idea. So Bobby planed two crusades. One at the end of January 2008 and the other just 6 days later in the first part of February. He was able to secure fields that can hold up to 50,000 people and we are expecting to see many come to the Lord and healed over the course of the two 9 day crusades planned there.



Pastors Joseph, Benson, Bobby, and Alfred standing In front of the reserved crusade field.



Bobby has done crusades in Kitale before. While I was there, I had the pleasure of meeting several people that were healed at a previous crusade Bobby conducted there. One of them was the precious girl shown in this picture with Bobby and her father – now a pastor in a church in Kitale. Her father brought her to the crusade on the last night – she was five at the time and had not developed any teeth in the top front, all she had was lower teeth. As you can see by her beautiful smile – God healed her - these beautiful teeth grew just a few days after her father brought her to the crusade. (See picture to left.)

While we were there we had the chance to pray for many people that suffered with various illnesses. More than a few were healed. The last Sunday I was there in Kitale I was praying for people after having preached a message about the transforming power of Jesus Christ – the local pastor was there translating for those that didn't speak English. I came across a young African mother and her little child that were crying.

When I asked what I could pray for them about she just said that she was already healed, that she just wanted to come up to the front and give the report that she and her child had been healed the previous week when she was prayed for. She and her child had suffered from a respiratory infection that they had been fighting for a long time – she was too poor to be able to afford treatment – but not too poor to afford the blessing of God. She was crying with tears of joy, when she reported that they were both able to breath and sleep though the night.

I hadn't planned on speaking when I agreed to come with Bobby, I was only planning on helping him move the equipment around but the Lord had other ideas. I taught Sunday school to a group of church elders – which was a humbling experience – especially since the Lord gave me a study on spiritual growth to teach them. I spoke on church growth to the leaders of a 4,000 member Nairobi church and had quite an impact on their strategy (or so I was told by the senior pastor).



A church service in Nairobi

I preached on two Sunday mornings to two different Kenya churches, and testified to the power of Jesus Christ to transform the lives of people using examples from the Bible and current stories that demonstrate that He is still doing today the same things He did back then.

I prayed for many to be healed, delivered, baptized in the Holy Spirit, and receive salvation, and saw many transformed by the power of God.



One of my favorite things though was to pray for a newly married couple – to pronounce a blessing on them. In Kenya after a couple is married, all the ministers that are attending the wedding surround the couple on all sides and pronounce blessings over them, each of them takes turns and the other agree with the one speaking. They are quite good at it and have developed a rhythm to the blessing and agreement; though I don't think I quite got the hang of it they had grace with me.

I stayed at the wedding for five hours but had to leave early to make another meeting. It was a great time for me.

I wish I could say the trip to Kenya was entirely enjoyable but I can not. I don't suppose anyone could unless one totally disregarded the desperate needs that much of the Kenyans have. The combination of poverty, lack of jobs, high population, the spread of aids and death of parents to aids or other causes has created a class of parentless children in Kenya that survive only by begging for food and sleeping in the streets.

Unfortunately these children often turn to drugs--- the most common being an inexpensive inhalant (glue) that they sniff and can get high for a short time – during which time the hunger pains go away. I had to turn away from many of these street kids that asked me for money for glue, I even had to step around several that were passed out on the streets.

What they don't know is that the glue kills brain cells, causes them to loose weight, damages their lungs, stunts their growth, and damages their minds ability to think. One of the common side effects is increased violence and anger, so the older street kids often exact justice on the smaller ones for various different perceived violations. The cycle continues and the crime and violence continue to escalate.



School children nearby

http://www.mercatornet.com/articles/for_kenyan_street_kids_glue_sniffing_is_a_way_of_life/

There is hope though. I met an African pastor that worked with a group that was using Kenyans to care for the orphaned children. One couple in Kenya can have up to 40 adopted children at a time. The pastor was one such father and had cared for 40 children in his home for several years.

In Kenya the cost to care for a child including medical, food, housing, and school is about \$27 dollars a month. I wish I had time to meet with the organizers of that effort while I was there but I didn't. It was nice to see the people of Kenya making some progress with the orphaned street children.

Of course the biggest need in Kenya is for the Gospel of Jesus Christ and the transformative power of Jesus Christ. I am glad to be able to report that we organized two large healing/salvation crusades coming up here in January and

for that reason I consider the trip a complete success. Even if I hadn't had the opportunity to preach and pray for so many, I would have thought so.

If you have any questions about Kenya, my trip or the upcoming crusades Bobby has planned don't hesitate to ask. I wanted to personally thank all those that helped make that trip possible you share in the fruit of our labors and in all the harvest that God will gather in these upcoming crusades.

God Bless.

David Akers



David Akers with Pastor Benson and wife Jane

Thanks, David, for letting us print your delightful letter. Tell us when you get it copywrited!