

Planting season

I appeal to you, brothers, in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ, that all of you agree with one another so that there may be no divisions among you and that you may be perfectly united in mind and thought. 1 Corinthians 1:10

So, neither he who plants nor he who waters is anything, but only God, who makes things grow. 1 Corinthians 3:7

Dear family and friends,

February was a full month for us and our team of several trips and meetings. We are happy to be back home and back to “normal” life – if there is such a thing. We have returned to rainy season which means most people are out planting in their fields to get enough harvest for another year. Our team is also looking at how we can increase the harvest in the Kilwa district.

This week Paul was in a meeting with the “Unity of Churches” leaders. While only 7 attended the meeting, there was great discussion on reaching out beyond their four walls. Most were shocked to hear that there are 74 villages in the Kilwa district alone that have no official church presence. While there may be a Christian in the community from other parts of the country, there is no regular gathering of believers. At this meeting, the local pastors agreed that they need to form a joint plan to intentionally reach these villages. Each leader is to go back to his own church and return with a plan for where and how they are prepared to place long-term workers in these villages. They also agreed that they would support each other in the initial outreach to the various villages with the Jesus film.

This is exciting for us as we see the churches attempting to work together and to admit that they need to do more than just hold a weekly service here for their own flock. But it also means more work. Most of these pastors and other church leaders rely on public transportation or motorcycles, if they have access to one, for getting around. This is both limiting in the amount of support that can be given to the villages as well as challenging to get around during rainy season. So, while our team cannot be the primary means of transportation to these villages, we want to use our resources to support this thrust as much as we are able to. Please pray that these churches would continue to have a passion for the lost and to have an increasing burden for Kingdom growth and less for their own denomination. Pray that our team would be wise in how we use our resources to support this movement.



The Africa Inland Church, Tanzania, (AICT), which we are working under, continues to provide Sunday services to Kikole and Ruhatwe, the 2 villages where the church showed the Jesus film in November. The services have been averaging about 5-10 attendees each, but local believers are taking the lead in providing leaders for the service and worship. The Kilwa Masoko congregation still provides the preaching. We are also trying to provide support to those believers to reach out to others in the communities, but we would still like to have someone living in one of the villages for a couple of years to provide more in-depth discipleship and to model outreach. Please pray for the right couple to be willing to live in Ruhatwe.

One of the biggest challenges to having someone move to a village like Ruhatwe is the issue of support. From our experiences, local workers who try to be self-supporting tend to become consumed with living and have very little time for outreach. But support from local churches has traditionally been minimal and not consistent. And that does not consider the emotional and spiritual support that these families need as they live apart from their extended families and other believers. We don't want to see our national workers struggling with broken marriages and distant children, who often study half-way across the country from the age of 7 to get a good education and be in a safe environment, because they lack the support they need to thrive in an outreach location. Please pray for the church to rally behind its outreach workers.

Saying all that, leads to another exciting opportunity ahead for us and our team. The outreach coordinator for the coastal diocese of AICT has asked if we would be willing to take the lead in providing missions training weekends to several churches in Dar es Salaam area. On the weekend of the 15th-17th of March, our team is joining with another team to run the first one in Bagamoyo, just north of Dar es Salaam. We plan to challenge the church to have a passion for outreach to unreached people groups in Tanzania and to come up with some tangible ways to help support and send more workers. Please pray that those churches would burn with a passion for the unreached and would use their resources to help support the work that is happening.



We are praying for a movement to spread throughout the entire southern coast. Our team is having a concentrated time of prayer and fasting on the 11th and 12th of this month in preparation for more focused outreach. Please join us in prayer.

1. That we would be sensitive to the Spirit's leading and only do His work
2. That the Spirit would prepare hearts in each place
3. That the believers would be unified in outreach
4. That only God would get the glory

If any of you would like to help provide more resources for any of the above outreach activities, we have a project with AIM at the following link: [Tanner coastal outreach project](#). We appreciate any participation you can have with these ministries. Thank you for praying about this.

On a personal note, starting in mid-April, Paul and I are taking 4 weeks away for concentrated language study. Yes, we have been here for nearly 30 years as adults, and another 15 years for Paul as a child, but we are seeing the need to improve our language – both as an example to our team and for our own personal ministry. And this is not happening in our busyness of life in Kilwa.

On our return, we will have several weeks of back-to-back guests. The first of whom is our daughter, Shara. She will be joining a team in Tanzania for a month as an AIM short-term worker and is adding on a couple of weeks beforehand to join me (Virginia) at an education support week in Kenya and to spend time with us in Kilwa. If you would like to hear more about her summer plans, you can write her at: tanzaniamk@gmail.com

Most of our other visitors are individuals and families who are looking for ways to help in our ministry – many expressing interest to return long-term in the future. Please pray that God would raise up the right workers for outreach on the south coast of Tanzania.

Thank you again for your prayers and support for us.
Until the King returns,
Paul and Virginia

*Field address: Box 57 Kilwa Masoko, Tanzania East Africa
AIM address: Africa Inland Mission Box 3611, Peachtree City, GA 30269
Tanner family US address: 357 Phyllis Ave, Rochelle, IL 61068*



