

Renewal Ministries
Mission to Tanzania

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by
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Mission Team



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2014 marks the fourteenth consecutive year that Renewal Ministries has conducted mission outreaches to this vast East African country. Once again we pioneered new territory by responding to an invitation to conduct a priests retreat, workshops, and outdoor rallies in the Diocese of Bukoba. Our destination was to the town of Bukoba, not the easiest place to access. Bukoba lies in the far reaches of Northern Tanzania, located on the West side of Lake Victoria, it is situated near the border of Uganda. Our best option for travel to Bukoba from Dar es Salaam was to take two in-country flights—Dar to Mwanza, Mwanza to Bukoba. Bukoba can be reached from Mwanza by road but there are numerous encounters with bandits. Another alternative is an eleven hour ferry boat journey from Mwanza, however that route is plagued by pirates operating amongst the hundreds of islands scattered throughout the lake.

As when setting out on any mission we pray that the Lord will provide solutions to all problems as they arise. This He has always been faithful to do. This journey however seemed to us to have Him working overtime. Our four team members from the USA rendezvoused at Dulles airport in DC for the first leg of our overseas flight. Boarding the plane was delayed by an hour for some reason never given. As we taxied out for takeoff the captain announced that all flights were grounded because of a powerful storm approaching the airport. For the next four hours we sat on the tarmac in the midst of a wild lightning, thunder, wind and torrential rain. During this trying time one passenger went a bit berserk. As the storm finally passed the captain announced that we were short of fuel to make it to Zurich and we would go back to the gate to refill. Finally we were on our way but knowing that we would

miss our next connecting flight—this we did, thus the next step was to go through a long drawn out rebooking process in Zurich. With two of our team members confirmed on a flight and two with standby status we had a short night in a Zurich hotel. By God's grace we were all on the same flight to Dar. By now we were a day late and missed our ticketed flights to Bukoba. Since flights normally only go from Dar to Bukoba we now had an extra day of waiting. On the morning of our flight we packed up and departed for the airport at 2:00 AM. At that time our driver received a text message that our flight had been canceled—no reason given—another day. The next morning at 2:00 AM we repeated the process, this time with success, although not without a lot of hassle about our luggage which was deemed to be overweight (had to make some payoffs which we would up end up doing four times).



Team with Bishop Kilaini (Bukoba Diocese)

Tanzanian brothers would begin the retreat and we would be there for the final part. However, due to our three day delay in arriving the retreat was over. The retreat was attended by fifty-five priests of the Bukoba Diocese. Leaders from the Tanzania Catholic Charismatic Renewal rose to the occasion and carried on. The retreat was marked by a great talk by Auxiliary Bishop Method Kilaini. Bishop Kilaini has been personally involved in Charismatic Renewal for many years since his days in a former assignment in Dar es Salaam. He along with the lay brothers did a great job of introducing the priests to the history of the Catholic Charismatic Renewal and the support and encouragement it has received from the past Popes up to and including Pope Francis. The retreat was considered a great success and very well received by the many priests.

Upon arrival, we immediately assumed responsibility for two of the six workshops being presented simultaneously each morning. Our task was to present the Healing and Deliverance workshops (attended by about 600 each day) and the Pro-Life workshop with about 60 attending each day.

In the afternoons the rallies began at 2:00 PM each day and continued until sundown. Bishop Kilaini was in attendance for a full day. Each afternoon about 3000 people gathered, this despite the fact that the location of



Daily Rally—Bukoba, Tanzania



Jean Thompson presents Pro-Life workshop

with many professions of faith as well as an abundance of those who testified of blessings received. It is a place that seems primed for a follow-up visit in the future.

Right: Many participants traveled great distances to attend. The grassy shoreline of Lake Victoria and the cool winds blowing off of the waters provided a great campsite for several hundred.

the field was not near the downtown area. On the other hand, it was a beautiful location (a large grassy field on the shores of Lake Victoria). Many people had traveled from afar to attend. Several hundred of them camped on the lake shore, complete families with many children. Some built temporary shelters and many cooked their meals on small fires all about. Others were housed in a school building some distance away. The space was rented by the Renewal as well and a bus provided to transport them to and from the rally sight.

In spite of our abbreviated stay in Bukoba the Lord seemed to prosper the time that we had. This was a first time event of it's kind in the Diocese of Bukoba. The people came from far and wide with great and expectant faith. Each day was marked



Conclusion

John Mathe notes the tremendous dedication and ceaseless work that our brothers and sisters in Tanzania continue to do. They continue to make great strides in evangelizing the country on a year round basis. They are very appreciative of the part that Renewal Ministries has continue to play in this over the past fourteen years. Plans are underway for next year's outreaches to the Songea and Njomba Dioceses, regions that we have not yet worked in.

The pro-life work that Jean Thompson brings is having an amazing impact on Tanzania. Jean has written some observations which I have included below.

Comments by Jean Thompson

This year's mission gave me a new perspective and appreciation of Renewal Ministries' work and presence in the world. Our schedule in Tanzania was constantly changing, yet because of the ground-work laid over 15 years and the relationships grown in the love and openness to the Holy Spirit, what needed to happen, happened. It was clear that the scriptures and direction that our Lord wanted to give the people in Bukoba were given and received. The people in the workshops were not only attentive and hungry, they were well prepared with relevant questions. Instead of five days, we only had three. But, they were three full, powerful days. In the Pro-Life workshop, there were both men and women asking very thoughtful, specific questions in regards to Natural Family Planning, contraceptives, and abortions. At the end, one nurse told us she and her doctor husband performed abortions. Now they could see it was a child to whom God had infused a soul and they would no longer do abortions. Both men and women were also now seeking to go to confession. Some of the men in the group told us they would now be warriors for Pro-Life as the battle for life grows in Tanzania.

