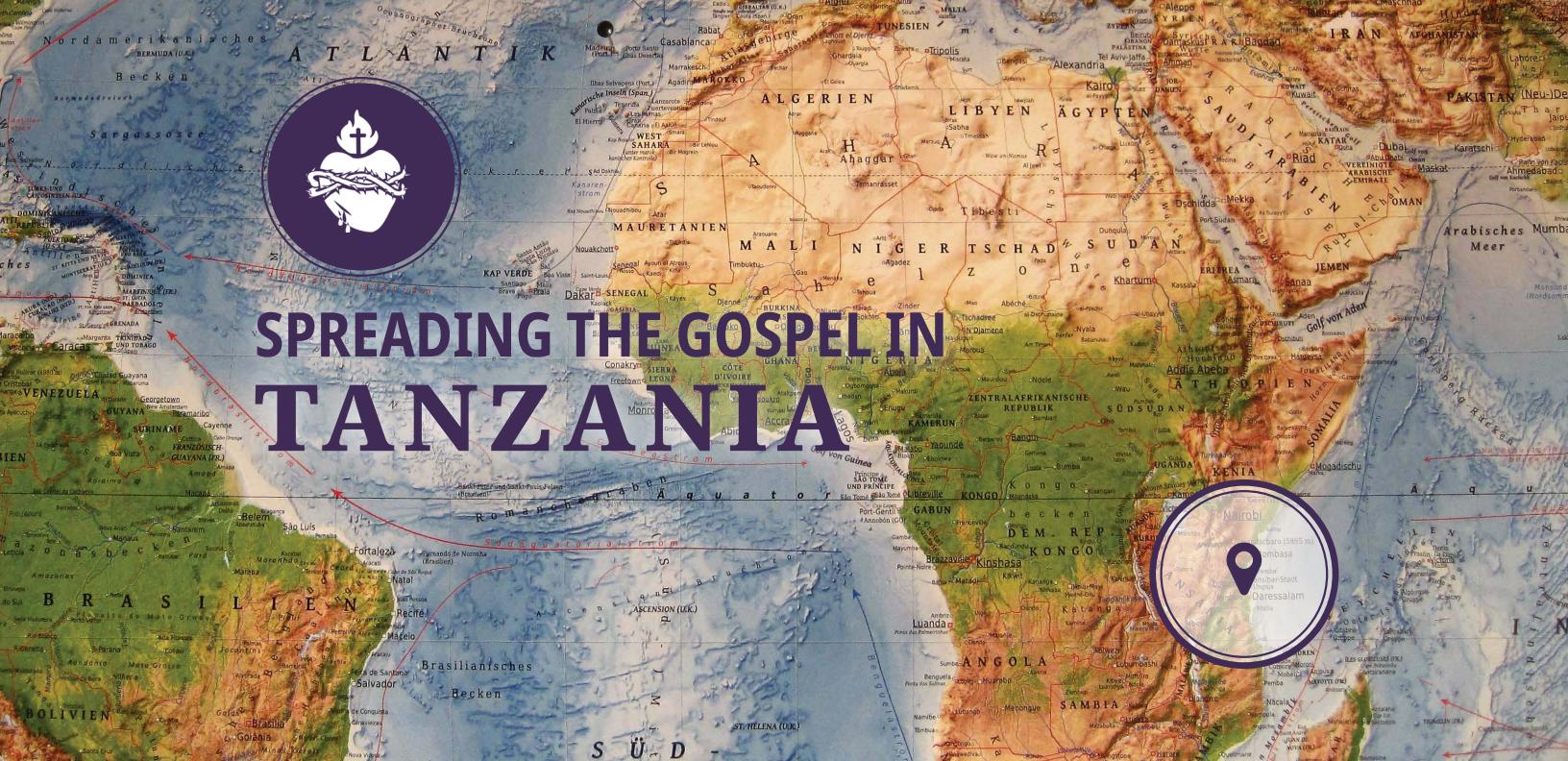




SPREADING THE GOSPEL IN TANZANIA



FROM TOM EDWARDS Country Coordinator for Tanzania

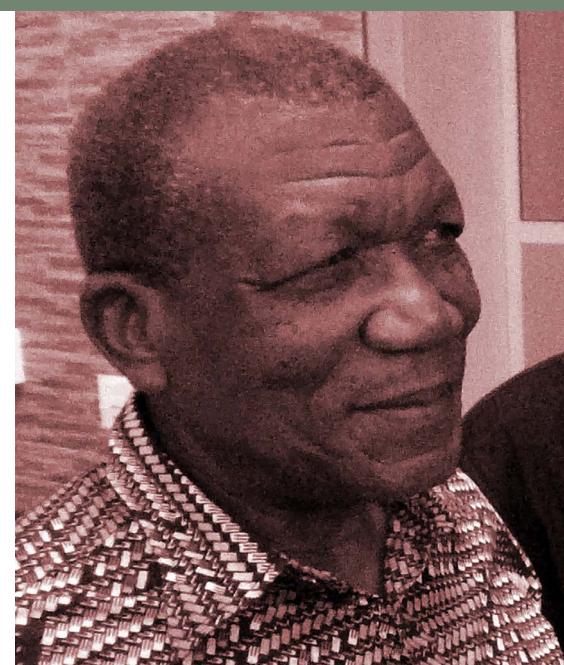
For the past twenty-one years, I have had the privilege of serving as a Country Coordinator for Renewal Ministries' missions to the beautiful country of Tanzania. Tanzania is a big country that shares borders with eight other countries, runs alongside hundreds of miles on the Indian Ocean, and contains some of the world's largest lakes. Tanzania has thirty-three Catholic dioceses, and we have conducted events in eighteen of them, some multiple times. Some of these dioceses are very remote and require up to eighteen hours of travel on a bus after landing in the country. Some areas can only be reached by small planes.

Early in 2020, our team of seven was eager to once again conduct a mission in a place we had never been, Singida,

Tanzania. Bishop Mapunda was expecting us to respond to his invitation to conduct large-scale Catholic rallies, as well as retreats for his priests and sisters. Other daily workshops would include pro-family teaching, evangelization, and ministry to young adults.

In February, the pandemic brought a screeching halt to travel plans. We scrambled to change the event to October, thinking things would surely get better. We actually purchased flights three times, and each time, they were canceled.

Three weeks before the event, it became obvious that our team was not going to be able to make it to Tanzania. That's when we proposed to our faithful Tanzanian brothers and sisters that they carry out the mission themselves, with Renewal Ministries covering the expenses. They rallied to the call, the bishop approved, and at the last minute, a retired Tanzanian bishop and one of our Kenyan priest friends joined the team. I've asked Sebastian Chisunga, who serves as the National Secretary to the Catholic Charismatic Renewal of Tanzania, to share a synopsis. He and Director Merito Kabassa of Iringa, Tanzania, were the main in-country organizers for Renewal Ministries' 2020 outreach. Sebastian's report follows.



FROM SEBASTIAN CHISUNGA In-country organizer for the Renewal Ministries' 2020 Tanzania outreach

This year's rally was the only one done in the absence of the actual Renewal Ministries' team, and the first to be facilitated locally with financial support from Renewal Ministries. The mission was initially scheduled to take place in July, but because of the Covid-19 crisis and the many obstacles it presented, the date was moved to October.

Finally, the long-awaited date arrived. There had been a lot of anxiety regard-

ing the difficulty in obtaining clergy to help facilitate the retreat for priests and sisters. There was a lot of off-and-on commitments from various priests. Two days before the start of the rally, Fr. Mathias Mulumba, a priest from Kenya, phoned from Arusha, Tanzania. He was on his way to Moshi, a town over 230 miles from Singida. After a short talk, he agreed to consult with his hosts to see if they could release him for our mission. The next day he called to confirm that he could come and be with us. Hallelujah!

He arrived the next day—the very day the rally was scheduled to start. Needless to say, we were so relieved that he had made it. What a mighty God we serve, One who answers by fire and makes a way where there's no way!

We started our program with praise and worship, followed by a teaching on Mary and the rosary, and then the rosary prayer. The teachings were much appreciated, a good exposition for the people and all of us.

We had four main events: a daily main rally, four days of a priests' and sisters' retreat, daily deliverance and healing ministry, and daily intercession. The topics for our daily rallies included God's love, sin, the occult and its bad effects, salvation, repentance and forgiveness, hospitality, the mercy of God, breaking curses and receiving deliverance, discipleship, and the Holy Spirit.

The main speakers were Archbishop Lebulu, Fr. Mulumba, Estelatus Mtemanyenja (a Renewal Ministries' Country Coordinator-in-training), and Celina Kolumbani.

As expected, the whole process was fiery. The Holy Spirit was in control and the people received the Word. Many were baptized in the Spirit and some spoke in tongues for the first time. Healings reported were of general body weakness, deliverance, and also spiritual healings. Powerful blessings came, especially with the teaching of forgiveness. Fr. Mulumba actually carried somebody on his shoulders as a demonstration of an unforgiving person carrying someone in their inner being.

This was a strong foundational rally for next year. Attendance varied between 1200 to 2000 people. I believe both retired Archbishop Lebulu and Bishop Mapunda of Singida were very pleased.

Thankfully, we also were able to host a retreat for priests and religious sisters. Topics discussed at that retreat included the need for priests to pastor the Renewal, the Charismatic Renewal as an allowed and accepted movement in the Church, the whole Church as Charismatic, the importance of baptism in the Holy Spirit, and the importance of ecumenism for Christian unity.

Archbishop Lebulu was the event's primary facilitator. We received many questions from the priests, such as where lay people get the authority to lay on hands on people and where does speaking in tongues come from?

At the conclusion, most of the priests said they had previously misunderstood the Charismatic Renewal. Two priests even declared they were now Charismatic and were going to allow it in their parishes. The sisters were especially touched and are hoping to communicate with us further.

Retired Archbishop Lebulu expressed his gratitude that, "Renewal Ministries facilitated this rally, even though you knew you weren't coming to share in this harvest." Also, Bishop Mapunda praised Renewal Ministries and your labor in the Lord.

The Tanzanian mission included daily teachings on topics such as repentance and forgiveness.



PLEASE PRAY

For all of the people suffering alone during this time, that a way may be found to offer them support and community, and that they also will find comfort and strength by drawing closer to our Lord and Blessed Mother.

...

That many who are away from the Lord, or in a lukewarm relationship with Him, will heed his call to holiness this Lent and surrender their lives more completely to Him.

...

For the prayer intentions of all our supporters and their family members, especially as they face the challenges of illness and economic uncertainty.

...