



August 2018

Successes and failures and ongoing challenges. During our first eleven years in Kenya, we've seen our share in each of these categories. In this letter, we want to share with you some of our key successes from our third term (2014-2017) as we continue to partner with you in the work of expanding Christ's Kingdom in Kenya. (Remember that we are currently in America on home assignment.) In our next letter, we plan to share with you some of our losses. We've had a pretty good win-loss record this term, so this update will be longer than most.

In our second term, we saw the death of Narok Bible Training Institute (NBTI), which primarily served the Community Christian Church (CCC) congregations in Maasai Land in Narok County. (*Whereas the USA is divided into states, Kenya is divided into counties.*) Then we saw the birth and death of Mission Institute East Africa (MIEA). As a result of these two failures, the Maasai congregations of the CCC began to feel the lack of training opportunities for their leaders. We were unwilling to start a new ministry that would depend exclusively on us. Instead, we were hoping to help the CCC establish a training ministry which would be sustainable and in which the CCC would be invested at the grassroots. Right at the end of our second term, the CCC established, on paper, the Community Christian Bible Training Institute (CCBTI) with a uniform curriculum for the whole CCC (Maasai, Turkana, and others).

Community Christian Bible Training Institute

During our third term, we helped to make this dream of CCBTI a reality. I (Joshua) wrote the course catalog and wrote or helped revise the course material for several classes — notably

- *Christian Stewardship & Congregational Finances*;
- *Church Administration & Church Discipline*;
- *Spiritual Disciplines*.



The original core of CCBTI was the long-established Turkana Bible Training Institute (TBTI) in Lodwar, Turkana County. Some of the old TBTI courses were retained, though revised. These included our *Church History*, *Eating the Word of God*, and *Evangelism & Cross-Cultural Missions*. I worked with TBTI leadership as they transitioned to the new CCBTI curriculum and was able to provide additional training to the Turkana teachers (all TBTI graduates). The CCBTI program includes 20 courses taught over 2 years.

We struggled for some time to establish a CCBTI presence in Maasai Land. Our first effort, a branch in the Mara North cluster hosted by the Endoinyo Erinka CCC, suffered failure to launch. However, CCBTI finally became a reality for all of CCC as it grew from one campus (CCBTI-Turkana, the old TBTI) to three campuses. Two



new church plant: Oltarakwai CCC, Mara Central
 photo credit (10 June 2018):
 Thomas ole Pesi, church planter and CCBTI student

new branches were established to serve the Maasai areas of CCC — CCBTI-Kajiado in Ng’ataek serves Kajiado County in Kenya and parts of Tanzania while CCBTI-Narok in Ewaso Ng’iro serves Narok County. None of this would have been possible without the hard work of our mentee, Sam Ntinga, who currently serves as the administrator of both CCBTI branches in Maasai Land.

Here are some recent numbers:

- CCBTI-Turkana
 - 2016 — 8 graduates
 - 2017 — 10 graduates
 - 2018 — 17 current students, 4 expected graduates
- CCBTI-Kajiado
 - 2018 — 12 expected graduates at first graduation (23 students enrolled, but 11 have missed some courses due to the severe drought in the region in 2017; the students include a number of Maasai church leaders from Tanzania)
- CCBTI-Narok
 - 2018 — 7 expected graduates



CCCBTI-Narok, Ewaso Ng’iro

Sam Ntinga (aka Sam Tome, in the red Maasai blanket) teaching a CCBTI-Narok class in June 2018.

During this time, we’ve taught a number of courses for CCBTI. I’ve taught both *Church History* and *Eating the Word of God* regularly for all three CCBTI campuses. I’ve likewise co-taught *Christian Stewardship & Congregational Finances* with Walter Mwaboki regularly for CCBTI at all three campuses and as a grassroots seminar for the Turkana CCC congregations at large. In addition, we’ve continued to provide teachers’ training for national CCBTI teachers, both in training seminars and working one-on-one.

One major victory that we won for CCBTI was the development of a partnership with Hope International University (HIU) in California.

Currently, we are working with CCC leaders Sam Ntinga and Wilson Kutinkala to develop a third year of classes for an advanced certificate and an increased missional focus in the existing two-year certificate program. Even though we’re “on furlough,” I have had four face-to-face meetings with Sam (three in Kenya, one in the USA) and innumerable phone and video conferences.

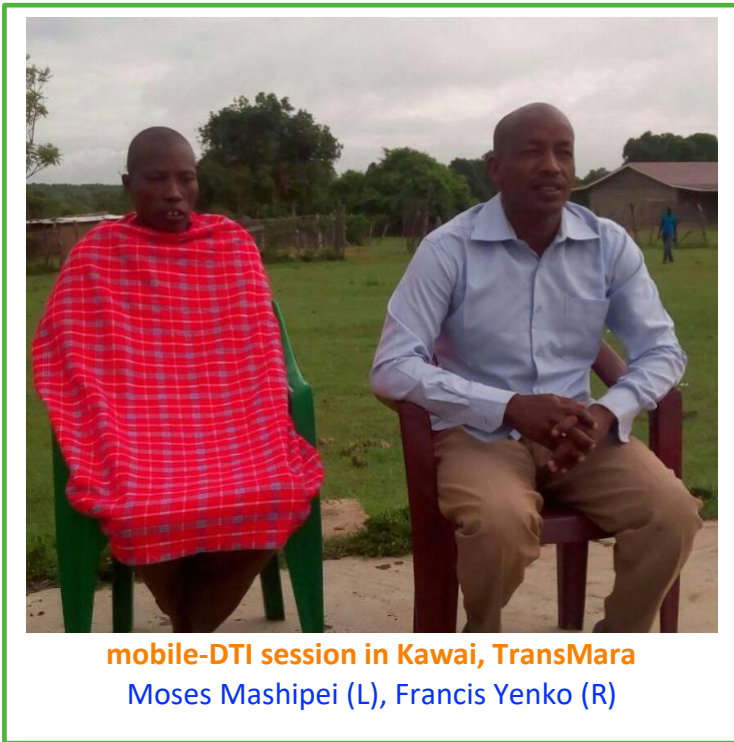
Celebrate with us the successful growth and ministry of CCBTI!

Discipleship Training Institute

The Maasai Discipleship Training School (Maasai-DTS) was founded in 2000 by South African missionary André Brink, in partnership with CMF. Modeled on the YWAM (*Youth With A Mission*) DTS ministries, it is a 13-week, 24/7 intensive period of deliberate discipleship. There are typically 10-12 students for each session. Some years later, I think in 2005, our Maasai friend Francis Yenko became the director. We started working with Francis in 2008. From 2009-2012, however, the Maasai-DTS existed only on paper. During our second term, we began to work with Francis to revive the DTS. We began to extensively revise and update the curriculum. For a total of five years we labored without seeing fruit. Then the harvest came.

During our third term, we celebrated the re-birth of the DTS on a firmer footing. We found an assistant director, Moses Mashipei, to share the work with Francis. We developed a cadre of some 20 Maasai to serve as a pool of teachers for the DTS, each of them DTS graduates themselves. A new base camp was established in Olepishet, Francis’s home village. In 2014, the reestablished DTS had its first session. During that session, the DTS was responsible for planting three new churches and for immersing many new believers into Christ.





mobile-DTI session in Kawai, TransMara
Moses Mashipei (L), Francis Yenke (R)

Francis and Moses led their students to a village without any believers; for years it had been actively resistant to the Gospel and was the home of a laibōn family. (The laibōns — *ilaibōnōk* in Maa — are the “ritual” experts of Maasai traditional religion; they practice divination and you can purchase blessings or curses from them.) It was an area of spiritual darkness. When the DTS cohort was approaching the village, they were met by a group of villagers. Instead of the usual cultural greeting, they told Francis, **“we hope that you have come to tell us the true way to God.”**

In 2016 another DTS goal was met. The DTS went “mobile” for the first time, taking the ministry into the TransMara district, returning again in 2017. During that session, the DTS changed its name to Discipleship Training Institute (to avoid confusion with the YWAM DTSes, with which we are not associated).

During our last term we have developed, taught, and handed over these courses to Maasai teachers:

- Stewardship
- Repentance, Forgiveness, Restitution, and Reconciliation
- Sexual Purity

That final class was something of a triumph. In traditional Maasai culture, sexual promiscuity has been institutionalized to the point that it might make even Hollywood blush. Yet those topics are considered taboo for discussion. As you might imagine, this creates a challenging situation for the churches. In the course we are frank to the point of embarrassment and explore what the Bible has to say about human sexuality. In addition, students are given tools to renounce and overcome past entanglements.

Usually, Ruth or I will teach a newly developed course once. Moses and Francis will join the class. The next session, one of them will teach it, and we’ll move on to revise or develop another course. But after teaching the Sexual Purity class the first time, Moses and Francis insisted that I would have to teach it the next session, too!

Curriculum Development

In addition to the curricula which we have developed for CCBTI and DTI, we have continued to work on curriculum projects for the CCC congregations. Here is what we’ve accomplished in our third term on the field:

- *Eating the Word of God* (originally published in Maa) has been published in kiSwahili and Nga Turkana;
- *What is the Bible?* (in Maa) has been completed and is in the editorial process;
- The first draft of *The Camel Has Four Legs: the history of the Church* has been completed in Nga Turkana.



We are also working on these ongoing projects:

- preparation of our Christian Stewardship materials into a book form, which we hope to publish in Maa, Turkana, and Swahili;
- Ruth has begun writing a children’s story-based curriculum for the CCC, “Naaimina the Lost Sheep.”

At the request of Kenyan friends, Ruth has completed the first draft of a book for Kenyan school children that teaches math through story, firmly based in East African culture. The working title is “The Math Goats.” We are hoping to publish it in Kenya and in the USA. This project is so brilliant (*allow me, Joshua, to give my wife due credit*) that it deserves its own newsletter, so we’ll share more on that later.



June 2018

(Why is Joshua wearing a bandage? At the end of May, he had hand surgery to remove a small tumor.)

Other Ministries

We've only touched on the highlights of our most recent term, and this newsletter is already quite long. Here are a few more parts of our work in brief.

- We (mostly Ruth) have HomeSchooled our children and interacted with Kenyan homeschoolers.
- Ruth has developed an effective prayer ministry and collected some amazing testimonies; she also is involved in the prayer ministry of our town church. *(More on this in a future update.)*
- We hosted and led a HomeGroup (more commonly called Life Groups in the States these days); we credit the Holy Spirit with the fact that three members were baptized on Easter Day in 2017.
- Joshua is a favorite Sunday School teacher of the ten- and eleven-year-olds at our town church.
- Joshua is a member of the worship team on some Sundays, playing trumpet.
- God has led us into a ministry of mentoring young couples, beginning when Alan & Winnie, a couple we did not then know, approached us at a church event; they married in 2017.
- Joshua has worked extensively with The Bible Society of Kenya to revise the Maa Bible translation.
- For around 18 months, Joshua served as acting team leader during a time of team transition — without having a decrease in other responsibilities. Team mates, national church leaders, and CMF office staff all commended him for his work.
- According to Angie Grogan, the Staff Account in CMF's home office in Indianapolis, Joshua sends in financial reports for more ministry project accounts each month than any other missionary in CMF. *(Joshua isn't sure if he should be encouraged or discouraged by this ... he may be the least inclined to accounting of anyone in CMF.)*
- We would be remiss if we don't remind you that our two teenagers have been baptized over the last term — Alitzah in 2016 and HannahGail in 2017.

grace and peace to you in our Lord and Friend Jesus,

JOSHUA + Ruth

furlough phone numbers

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If you call and we can't answer, please leave a message or send a text.