

JUNE 2008

Rolling Stone Ministries

An angel of the Lord came down from heaven and, going to the tomb, rolled back the stone and sat on it...

The angel said, "...He is not here; He has risen." Matthew 28:2, 5-6



Greetings from Iowa!



Laurie and I arrived in Iowa June 17, and have been busy since our arrival. While Southern California was enduring a heat wave, we were having wonderful weather, with an occasional thunderstorm. We are about 45 miles northwest of Des Moines, at a place called Lake Panorama, near the city of Panora. How did we end up in Iowa? Laurie is from West Des Moines, and her sister lives out here. We visited her a couple of years running, and decided this would be a great place to spend summers working on ministry plans and writing.

A couple of years ago, after returning from Iowa, I gave my "Cutting Edge" Bible class an overview of our summer experience, including speaking at a church in Panora. Ardiss Laughery almost fell off her chair when I mentioned "Panora," because that is where she grew up. Small world. Chet Laughery is from the nearby town of Guthrie Center, and they were just in town for Chet's 60th high school reunion. We were able to share a meal together, and visited the same church last Sunday.

Speaking of the church here in Iowa, last year I spoke at Panora Church of the Brethren. They were going through a dilemma due to the local Brethren denomination leaders wanting to be "inclusive," (or is it "progressive,") and allow openly homosexuals to be pastors. Further, the denominational leaders wanted to go on record with their belief that there are ways to God other than through Jesus. I'm not exactly sure which Bible they are reading, but the Brethren church here in Panora was troubled, and met with the denomination leaders on several occasions. When it became clear that the "progressive" agenda would continue, the Brethren congregation here decided to leave the denomination. They renamed the church "Faith Bible Church." Laurie and I advised the church as to their rights to the property (the congregation appeared to have the right to keep the property). The denominational leaders didn't like having a congregation depart, but made overtures that they would take no action, since they claimed to be about "unity."

Well, just a week or so ago the Brethren denomination filed a lawsuit against Faith Bible Church, asking the court to not only boot them off the property, but to also pay damages (including attorneys fees). Perhaps the Brethren leadership forgot about Paul's admonitions in I Corinthians 6 that says Christians should not take fellow believers before secular courts, but instead should choose wise people to arbitrate the dispute.

Rather than fight, Faith Bible Church decided to pack up, and start meeting at the local high school. The new plan was just announced last Sunday (June 22), and already there have been offers from folks willing to donate land for a new building. The Lord will vindicate those who follow His Word, which is lamp unto our feet, and a light unto our path.

We are excited about the ministry opportunities here in Iowa, in California, and in Kenya. The news of the sudden passing of Bob Mitchell from our home church in California (leaving behind two teen-aged boys, now orphans) reminds us of how precious each day is, and how we are not promised tomorrow. Thus, more than ever, it is time to be about the King's business.

Love and blessings from the Heartland,

John

PASTOR GEORGE MUGURO SPEAKS TO MEMBERS ABOUT KENYAN MINISTRY

By Irene Matthews (reprinted with permission)

Mild mannered, soft spoken and truly a humble servant, Pastor George Muguro's slight stature belies his huge heart for his people and especially his Lord Jesus Christ. Senior Pastor of Satellite Church in a slum area of Nairobi, Kenya, Pastor George also serves as Manna Bible Institute's Principal and where Covenant members John and Laurie Stewart have taught and spoke in their two spring trips this year and last. Pastor George is also involved with the Caroline Wambui Children Orphanage. Married to his wife, Irene, a full time nurse, they have a six-year-old son, David.



Last month, Pastor George was in Oregon for children's ministry training. This month he was in Southern California for a Pastor's Retreat at Calvary Chapel Bible College in Murrieta and was able to speak to the Stewarts' Rolling Stone Ministries (RSM) supporters who heard first hand of the progress and the needs in Kenya. "First of all I want to thank-you very much for the supplies your church sent us during the country's recent political unrest. My people and I are very grateful for the funds, blankets, and food that were given to those who had been displaced because so many of their homes were bombed," Pastor George said. RSM has also sent Christian books and Bible commentaries to Manna Bible Institute.

"We still need expanded facilities, a library, computers for research, and for scholarships to sponsor students, as well as continued prayer," he said. "We at Manna Bible Institute (MBI) appreciate that you sent John and Laurie (to us.) All the students loved them. And because of John's willingness to answer Biblical questions on National Radio, Nairobi University wants to sent 200 students to Manna to study," he said. However, that poses a problem as Manna has little space to house such numbers, let alone feed them even for three days. In fact, both of Manna's current dormitories together (one for women and another for men) would be about half the size of Covenant's Heritage Hall including the bunk beds to sleep over 50 students.

MBI provides leadership training for pastors, most of whom also hold teaching jobs in their rural areas. With open enrollment, the fees at MBI are the cheapest in the country because those who come have such limited funds; therefore, the school often operates on a deficit. "Hungry to learn," the pastors come to the school on a rotating basis three months a year and are on a three year program including two weeks of intensive study, sun up to sun down. Two months of the year, Children's workers attend school with one week of intense study. "We find that engaging little children with simple props such as hand puppets is a valuable tool for them to hear the Gospel, and their parents and other adults are pulled in and engaged as well," said Pastor George. "The Children's leaders need to learn these skills and techniques in communicating with children."

In the Kibera slums, where one million people live in an area half the size of Villa Park, Muslim and tribal differences are evident. Muslims try to appeal to these poor people by giving them food and shelter. Pastors battle this influx by forming friendships with individual families, and through prayer, even Muslims have been won to Christ. One convert now even teaches at MBI.

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**PASTOR GEORGE MUGURO SPEAKS
TO MEMBERS ABOUT KENYAN MINISTRY (Continued from page 2)**

“We are also involved in the Carolyn Wambui Orphanage located in the slum area for children ages 2-6. We see changed lives from being ragged and dirty to those who now are leaders,” he said. “One boy, Joseph, was so hungry when we found him that he ate two plates of rice when he first came to the orphanage. We had to convince him there would always be rice for him to eat.” One of Pastor George’s goals is to build modular houses so that Christian couples can take orphans in their homes.

“The church is growing in Kenya and it seems to grow most when it’s oppressed,” said John Stewart and then he asked Pastor George what the biggest difference was between the American and Kenyan church and what was most needed here.

“Comfort in America is the biggest difference. We do not have such seats in our church as you do. Everything is made easy here. What is needed here is Revival,” he said, “that the church focuses on the eternal rather than temporary. We read good history and love America,” he said. “We read of the Founding Fathers who were Christians and of their faith, that America was blessed because of its Constitution. In Africa, we are poor but we love God and seek him. My parents were humble people and I remember the phrases my mother always said to my twin brother and me in whatever situation we found ourselves, ‘God is good,’ ‘Glory to God,’ and ‘In everything give thanks.’”

Pastor George also traveled to St. Louis, Missouri, where he visited fellow supporters and the Stewarts’ friends, John and Suzanne Galvin’s New Commandment Ministry. While there, a benefactor allowed Pastor George to pick out books, tapes and DVD’s at a Christian Bookstore and paid for its costs and shipping to Kenya for both MBI and his Children’s Ministry.

Covenant also has the opportunity through the Rolling Stone Ministries to support Pastor George and his Kenyan brothers and sisters in Christ. The Stewarts are planning a kind of “Work and Witness” Mission trip to Kenya next summer 2009, to build homes, expand existing buildings, and send more Bible commentaries to the school. Anyone interested in the 2009 summer mission trip and/or sponsoring a MBI student is urged to contact the Stewarts at stewartmission@sbcglobal.net.

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COMING SOON!
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John and Laurie are excited to see RSM reaching its goals, blessing and helping others!

GOAL: *Supply books for Manna Bible Institute's library*

STATUS: Due to financial contributions, RSM sent their first shipment of study books to Manna!

GOAL: *Israel trip November 2008 led by John & Laurie*

STATUS: Trip planning has been finalized! Details inside...

GOAL: *Establish campaign for Manna Bible Institute scholarships*

STATUS: "Adopt" a Manna student. Details still to follow.

GOAL: *Develop RSM Website*

STATUS: Looking for web designer to create RSM website to communicate mission, purpose, and events.

GOAL: *Design and produce RSM brochures and flyers*

STATUS: Need someone to create promotional literature to educate others about RSM

GOAL: *Organize summer 2009 "Work & Witness" team mission trip to Kenya*

STATUS: Planning a building project –home for AIDS orphans

GOAL: *Winter Community Outreach Extravaganza*

STATUS: Tentative date for capital campaign concert with Milele for building home for AIDS orphans.

