

A Dallas Church Partnership Builds Church Unity in Tanzania

From the desk of Rev. Dr. Celestin Musekura, President and CEO



Rev. Celestin Musekura, Ph.D.

Unity of all believers was a major concern for Christ at the end of His earthly ministry as we see in John 17. His desire is not a partial unity of all believers but rather a complete unity despite the diversity of talents, resources, contexts, experiences and cultures. Unfortunately, the church has often not been

intentional in building bridges between different church denominations and traditions. As a result of these divisions and the inability to unite for a higher purpose, some of the Great Commission efforts have been fruitless.

In Africa, church denominations and traditions have caused divisions among believers in the same way that tribal/ethnic diversity has caused bloody tribal and religious wars. ALARM's goal is not only to develop leaders, reconcile relationships and transform communities but also to promote and strengthen unity and collaboration among believers of different denominations and traditions, both in Africa and North America in order to achieve the Great Commission and become agents of unity, reconciliation and transformation.

Three churches in the Greater Dallas (TX) area have started a partnership to work together with ALARM in responding to the needs of training, equipping and empowering church leaders in Tanzania for effective ministry. The mission leadership at Bent Tree Bible Fellowship of Carrollton, Trinity Fellowship Church of Richardson and Northwest Bible Church of Dallas are funding and sending joint teams to train pastors, church leaders, women and youth leaders from different denominations and tribes in Tanzania. This partnership has adopted the Pastoral Leadership Training Institute (PLTI), a three-year program of training key denominational church leaders in discipleship, bible knowledge, theology, peacebuilding, leadership development, etc. This spring, a team of women leaders from

two of these churches went to Tanzania to train women leaders of women's ministries. Many of these Tanzania pastors have never seen different American churches coming together in one team to facilitate a seminar of leaders and pastors from different denominations. These Dallas-based congregations have become a model and encouragement to Tanzanian churches to work together in their efforts to transform their communities. United by ALARM programs and modeled by the churches in Dallas, many church leaders in Tanzania are discovering the beauty and blessings of diversity and are coming together for a great purpose—the fulfillment of the Great Commission.

Mike Neukum, the Director of Missions at Bent Tree Bible Fellowship, when asked about the most beautiful thing he has appreciated about this partnership, shares: *"I would say that it is the fact that we get to come together as three local churches in the Dallas area and work together in unity. We are able to pool our gifts, talents, experience and resources and learn from each other as we work to further God's kingdom in Tanzania. We pray that it will be a powerful witness to the Tanzanian church and inspire them to come together and work together to reach Tanzania for Christ."*



Tanzania Partnership Team in Mtwara, February 2011

Please pray specifically for:

- Continued financial blessings to support the work of ALARM in the 8 countries we serve
- More partnerships like the Tanzania Partnership to develop
- Youth Leadership Training taking place in South Sudan in April, May and June

Changing a Community...One Cow at a Time

As we seek to develop and empower African leaders and reconcile communities, we impress upon church leaders the need to holistically serve their communities.

The Malindi District in Kenya is among the seven districts of the Coast Province and is a popular tourist destination. Despite this, 66% of the population of this district lives in abject poverty. Due to the dire poverty, pastors in the Malindi District make little, if any salary.

ALARM saw a need to empower the pastors of this district to serve their church and provide for the needs of their families by starting a project with the pastor's wives. This project not only provides for the physical needs of church leaders and their families, but the group consists of multiple tribes and denominations, so as they work together and depend on one another, reconciliation takes place.

In this project, the pastor's wives are given a pregnant dairy cow, so they are able to improve their family's nutrition through milk production. The women are also able to sell the milk which helps to provide for their food, clothing, shelter and educational needs. As a part of the program, the women are expected to raise their first female calf to maturity and then pass it on to another woman. 20 households are currently part of the program and two of their calves have reached maturity and been passed on.

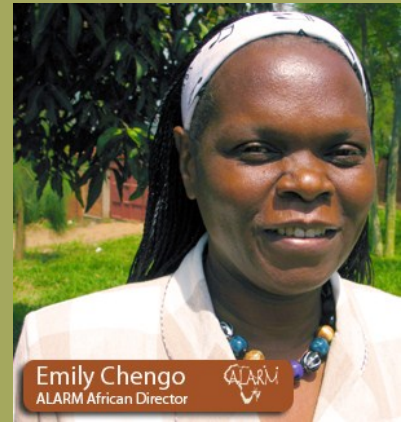
One cow went to Hellen after being raised by Sarah, her mentor. Hellen had this to say, "I have waited for this day in anticipation, at first it seemed like it will never come, but thank God it has come. In a few days I too will be feeding my family with milk from our cow. God is great,"

Esther was able to give a cow she had raised to Constance who said, "I am grateful to God for his faithfulness. I have prayed and waited on God for this day and receiving this cow is a blessing to me and my family."

"Receiving this cow is a blessing to me and my family."

In January of this year, funds were received for the expansion of the project. Ten women (and their households) have joined the program, will soon begin their training to learn to care for the cows and will receive their cows by the end of April. They will then be able to provide for their families and eventually help another family do the same.

Through God's continued provision, the "Malindi Cow Project" will be able to provide a means of support to more households and begin breaking the cycle of poverty in the Malindi District. By addressing this, ALARM seeks to not just provide food and nutrition to families, but to provide opportunities to develop leaders. Families are given the ability to support themselves and thus reach out and impact the community and church, and to become true servant leaders.



Emily has been married to her husband, Joseph, for 29 years and they have three children. They are very active in their church; Emily and Joseph lead a Cell Bible Study Group and work with the Youth Ministry and Marriage Enrichment with the Nairobi Pentecostal Church. One of Emily's passions is working in the community; "As we get older, we are more passionate about serving communities to assist them to improve their total wellbeing in Christ, spiritually, physically and emotionally.

Emily joined ALARM in 2006 from a background in management consulting, specializing in helping companies develop strategies for growth. She holds a Master of Business Leadership (MBL) degree from the University of South Africa and a B.Com degree in Accounting and Business Administration from Daystar University, Kenya. Emily's range of experience gained through her work with international non-governmental organizations, micro-enterprise initiatives and the corporate sector are a great asset to ALARM.



Sarah (on the left) presenting a cow to Hellen and her children.

OOPS!
The February Newsletter stated that Nathan Ndyamiyemshi had completed his PhD in Old Testament from Nairobi Evangelical Graduate School of Theology. Nathan started his doctoral studies but returned to Rwanda to head the ministries of ALARM.