



DIRT FLOORS AND GOLDEN FAITH



THE CHURCH IN KENYA

During a time of unimaginable violence following a disputed Kenyan national election in 2008, Pastor Daniel was forced to flee from his home. His house and all his possessions were burned to the ground. Now, one year later, he is prepared to return to his home town and minister to the very people who torched his house.

Many of Pastor Alfred's church members fled during the same period of persecution. Now Pastor Alfred is trying to rebuild the ministry of his church, beginning all over again without the majority of his congregation. When asked if he would like to relocate to a safer area, Pastor Alfred said that he is where God wants him to be, and he would not leave without God's blessing.

Believers in Kenya like Pastor Daniel and Pastor Alfred face persecution, spiritual warfare, and poverty each and every day. And yet they are full of joy and passion as they worship and witness. Many walk a mile or two to attend church in a "building" with a tin roof, dirt floors, open windows, and rough benches. But nothing stops these Christians from praising the Savior and trying to win their communities to Christ.

A team from Bellevue went to Kenya in July to work with evangelist Mike Curry and local pastors. Many team members learned that while they could minister to the physical needs of the people of Kenya, they had a lot to learn from the faith of the local believers. "What I saw the most was an incredible faith among these pastors,"

said team member Jeff Moser. "There is a spiritual battle taking place in Kenya, and these pastors fight it every day. But there is also an incredibly ripe field to harvest. Many people are open to the Gospel because they see their faith."

In addition to meeting with pastors and church members, the team served at feeding stations, orphanages, and schools. They also distributed eye glasses and medication. Much in the way that our Bellevue Loves Memphis projects open the door for churches and believers to witness to our community, the services the team provided in Kenya will allow the local church to follow up and share the Gospel.

The church of Kenya may not have beautiful buildings where they can worship and study in safety, but they do have a fire in their hearts for serving the Lord. "Their lives are not perfect or wealthy," said team member Stephanie Pickett. "But believers there are so solid and filled with joy, and they possess a faith that I can't hold a candle to. That is far more in the Lord's eyes than all the wealth and prosperity the U.S. could ever offer."

"Do not store up for yourselves treasures on earth, where moth and rust destroy, and where thieves break in and steal. But store up for yourselves treasures in heaven, where neither moth nor rust destroys, and where thieves do not break in or steal; for where your treasure is, there your heart will be also." Matthew 6:19-21