

Victory

magazine

Hidden With Christ Ministries
March/April 2025



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On a Personal Note...

BY RITA LANGELAND

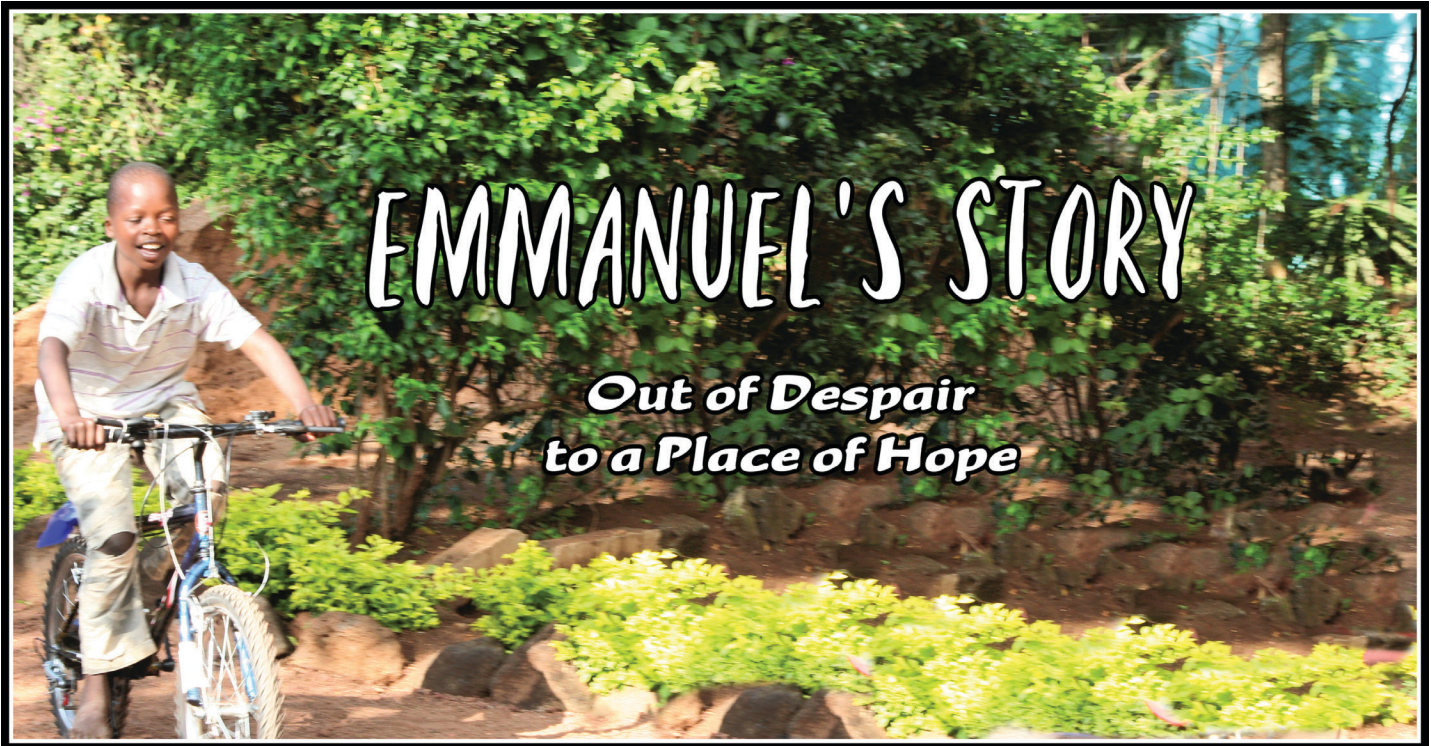
It was more than forty years ago that my husband and I sat in a church pew, attending an evening service in a town in Northern California. We were new to the area, and it was our first visit to that church. When the pastor exhorted the congregation to greet those sitting nearby, a gracious couple turned to us and made us feel welcome. Then to our surprise, they asked if we would like to come to their home for dessert after the service was over. We happily agreed, having no idea that simple invitation would mark the beginning of a life-long and priceless friendship.

This precious couple and their “yours, mine and ours” family, became like family to us. We learned so much watching their dedicated Christian lifestyle of love, grace and radical generosity. Over the years that we knew them, they took in 48 foster children, many of them drug-addicted infants who were born to mothers who took drugs throughout their pregnancy. Caring for these children required tremendous grace and patience, as they screamed all night in agony, until the drugs were cleansed from their systems. We saw it first-hand, occasionally “babysitting” for a weekend to give them a break. To us – this couple demonstrated a love that seemed to have no end!

The father of the family, Ed, was a business owner whose generosity became legendary. He was a quiet man with a tremendous depth of wisdom. Looking into his eyes you could see this amazing mixture of kindness and wisdom. One of our favorite pastimes in those early years of our marriage was to have coffee with Ed, pour out all that was on our hearts and listen to his wisdom on every subject we brought to him. Years later, when we moved 600 miles south, to establish Safe Harbor Church, my husband and I had moments when we would look at each other and say, “If only we could just sit and have coffee with Ed...” We missed his wise counsel and encouragement tremendously.

I have come to realize that as human beings who are consumed with day-to-day pressures, we don’t often reflect on the people who have deeply influenced our lives. And even more concerning, we fail to acknowledge and express gratitude for their life-changing impact until we suffer the loss of that individual. I am guilty of being that person. Though I was able to express my love and appreciation to Ed just before he went home to be with the Lord, I truly wish that I had not waited so long.

Let me urge you to consider those who have impacted you deeply, encouraged you to press on, or influenced your direction in life. Don’t wait until they are gone to express your appreciation for all that they have imparted to you – lest the only people who hear it will be those attending the memorial service.



The first thing that caught our attention when Emmanuel came to live at Treasures of Africa Children's Home was his stunning smile. Yet hidden behind that beautiful smile, was a lot of heartache.



Emmanuel in 2007 shortly after arriving at Treasures of Africa Children's Home

Emmanuel was eleven years old when he was brought to Treasures of Africa. He had been living in a rural village with his mother and siblings. His father had died when he was very young. His mother was quite ill, though it is unknown if she was even aware of the serious nature of her own medical condition.

One day, Emmanuel's mother decided to take Emmanuel's four-year-old brother, Antoni, to the hospital. He was very sick from several maladies including intestinal worms, TB and a serious condition he inherited from his mother at birth. They boarded a bus to travel to the town of Moshi. It was a trip from which she would never return, and it was the last day Emmanuel saw his mother alive.

When mother and son arrived at the hospital, it was quickly apparent to the staff that the mother was very ill. Both were admitted and the mother died before the day was over. The staff had very little information on these two patients and resorted to making an announcement on the local radio station, in an attempt to find any living relatives. The Social Welfare office was informed, and they took charge of Emmanuel's little brother, bringing him to Treasures of Africa Children's Home.

After the hospital released the radio announcement seeking relatives of the dead woman and her son, a neighbor in Emmanuel's village heard the broadcast and informed the family. That is when the Social Workers became aware that Emmanuel's mother had left two more children back in the village. The Social Welfare office reunited Emmanuel, his three-year-old sister, Sabitina, with their brother Antoni at Treasures of Africa Children's Home. Though tragedy brought them to TOA, it was a safe place for these three siblings to land.

Despite being 11 years old when he arrived at TOA, Emmanuel had never been to school and did not know how to read. He had to face the enormous challenge of starting first grade at the age when he should have been in the fifth grade. With help from our tutoring program at the orphanage, Emmanuel learned to read. With a lot of effort on Emmanuel's part, he made tremendous progress in Primary School and was even able to skip a grade.

By the time he was ready for Secondary School, his hard work paid off. He was accepted into an excellent all boys Christian Boarding School. He worked hard, progressed well and graduated. Deciding what to do next was a big challenge.

The staff at Treasures of Africa encouraged him to consider training for a career in Wildlife Tourism, one of the biggest employment sectors in Tanzania. His friendly personality and his command of English made him a good candidate for that field. But Emmanuel resisted and wanted to follow his TOA "sibling" Raymond, to Arusha Technical College. Though he was counseled against this idea as he had never displayed interest or aptitude for anything mechanical, we allowed him to give it a try. Sadly, this effort was not successful.

Disappointed and still resisting the idea of the tourism industry, Emmanuel then tried working at various jobs. The harsh reality of the poor job market in Tanzania convinced him he needed to reconsider the counsel he had been given early on.

He applied to Mweka College of African Wildlife Management and was accepted. Three years later, Emmanuel graduated from the most respected Wildlife Management College in East Africa and had fallen in love with the beauty and wildlife of Tanzania. This was only made possible through the generosity of so many Treasures of Africa supporters over the years!



**Emmanuel on Graduation day
From Mweka College of African
Wildlife Management**

Please pray for Emmanuel as he faces a challenging job market, though he is currently interning with a company that may hire him. His dream is to eventually become a Wildlife officer with the Tanzania Wildlife Parks Authority.

Please read the following page – a letter from Emmanuel to all donors to Treasures of Africa KIDZ project over these many years!



An Open Letter to Donors of Treasures of Africa

Dear Friends,

My name is Emmanuel Thomas, a graduate of the College of African Wildlife Management in Mweka, Tanzania. It is with great pleasure, appreciation and a thankful heart that I am sending my greetings of gratitude to you.

I'm so thankful for your unwavering support in my academic journey all along without getting tired or giving up. I acknowledge the contributions and untiring support of everyone who has been so generous in the areas they were able. I thank you for feeling moved to do so, in order for me to accomplish my academic journey.

Perhaps some of you are widows, people from various life situations, and though we have never met, you have never ceased to lend me a helping hand. It is certain that you have been going through different challenges in life, ups and downs, but through them all, Almighty God has stood on your side. I am very grateful for your continuous support throughout my academic journey despite your own challenges.

You have been a great blessing to me. May Almighty God remember all your offerings and bless you abundantly.

**Emmanuel Thomas Ndinga
Moshi, Tanzania**

The Amazing Comfort of a

BLANKET



*Since God chose you to be the holy people He loves,
you must clothe yourselves with ... kindness...*

Colossians 3:12 NLT



We have been called by God to live lives filled with kindness toward others. Yet many people hesitate to offer small kindnesses...thinking such an effort to be too insignificant to make a difference. But the truth is that kindness is a powerful tool in reaching people's hearts.

As a ministry, we are often given the honor of being the "couriers" of the kindness of others to East Africa. A group of dedicated women in California who belong to a service club called "The Binky Patrol" worked long and hard to produce blankets that could be taken to Tanzania and distributed to children in need. The club's goal is to **"Make blankets and give them away to children in need of comfort."**

Their blankets made it inside prison walls to women who had given birth while incarcerated. (In Tanzania – a baby born in prison may stay with the mother up to 2 years of age) Their handmade blankets were distributed in the spartan maternity ward of a Tanzanian hospital and out in the tribal area where comforts of any kind are scarce. Can you imagine a perfect stranger bringing you a tangible gift of comfort that you could not obtain for yourself? That was the impact these simple kindnesses wrought in Tanzania.

Never dismiss the power of a small kindness that you can offer to another human being. You cannot imagine how meaningful it could be for the recipient. And never underestimate the comfort of a blanket!

He comforts us in all our troubles so that we can comfort others.

When they are troubled, we will be able to give them the same comfort God has given us.

2 Corinthians 1:4 NLT

Editor's Note: The Binky Patrol is a non-profit organization which has chapters all over the U.S. They create and distribute homemade "comfort blankets" to hospitals, shelters, emergency foster care, and to young victims of trauma and homelessness. You can make a difference with your gift of sewing or quilt making by contacting a local chapter. Check out their website: <https://binkypatrol.org/>

The Story of **OSEKERI** A Maasai Elder

by Pastor Geoffrey Kioko

Back in October (2024) during a visit to a church in Esilalei village, the Spirit of God singled out a certain elderly man who was seated in the congregation during the Sunday service. The church was filled with people from the Maasai tribe, men, women and children. The Holy Spirit told Pastor Rita to speak to the man after the service and ask him a specific question.



Osekeri standing outside the church in Esilalei Village

When the service was over, and people began to move outside, Pastor Rita caught up with the man and spoke to him through an interpreter. She asked if she could speak to him, and they walked outside and sat under the shade of a thorn tree. She explained that when she saw him in the church, the Lord had spoken to her and instructed her to ask a simple question. Had he ever fully surrendered his life to the Lord? He admitted that though he considered himself a church member, he had never done so. His reasons were many, including the Maasai cultural traditions which were in conflict with the Bible. But he promised that the next time we visited the church he would be ready to give himself completely to the Lord.

Two months later, on the 7th of December, just after our annual Christmas banquet for the TOA KIDZ, the Lord prompted Pastor Rita that we needed to drive back to Esilalei village the following day to see Osekeri, as we had promised in our previous visit. Being a Sunday, the idea was to arrive there after the church service and pray with him to receive the Lord. So, the following morning we embarked on an eight-hour (roundtrip) journey to meet with Osekeri.

On the way, we called Pastor Zablon, so that he could inform Osekeri that we were coming. The journey was smooth with the views of blooming flame trees dotting the landscape as we drove. Traffic was unusually light, and the surprising absence of numerous police stops that normally greeted drivers between the cities of Moshi and Arusha, made the journey so peaceful.

We arrived at the Esilalei village church a few minutes before 2pm. We found the Sunday church service just ending. After greeting Pastor Zablon and some other church members, we moved into the church to sit with Osekeri for our meeting.

When the conversation started, Pastor Rita told Osekeri that she had come to pray for him to receive Jesus as earlier promised. Before she could continue, Osekeri interjected and said this must have been the hand of God as he had intended to travel that morning to see his family that lived quite a distance from there.

However, he could not get the bus fare he needed, otherwise we would not have found him that day. After realizing he lacked the bus fare to make the journey, he decided to go to the church and pray before the service started. Just as he finished praying, Pastor Zablon came in and informed him that Pastor Rita and Pastor Kioko were coming to see him after church. To him, the lack of bus fare was God ordained so that he would not miss meeting with us that day.

After this conversation, Pastor Rita asked him whether he was ready to pray to receive Jesus as His Lord and Savior, to which he responded, "I am more than ready!" Then He proceeded to tell us how he could not sleep for some nights thinking about God and about his life. He explained that he had come to the realization that even before he was willing to turn his heart toward God, that God had watched over and protected him when he did not deserve it. He gave the example of drinking so heavily with his friends one night, that he collapsed in the dirt, in a drunken stupor, while trying to make his way home. When morning light came, he found himself in an area where lions hunted for prey at night, and he knew that God had spared his life.

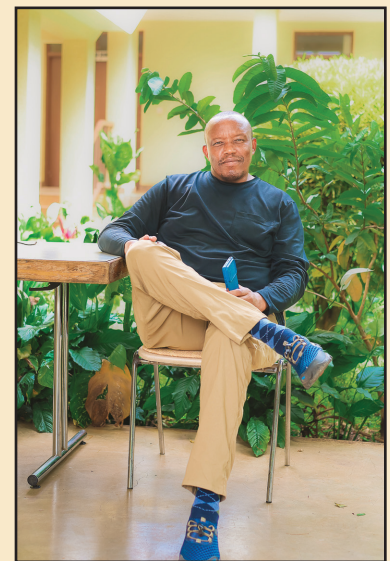
He explained that when he does sleep, he wakes up very early, gets out of his Maasai hut and lifts his heart to pray to God. As we listened, it was evident to us that he is a seeker of God, and his heart is so open to the Lord. In his prayer he always tells God to hold his hand and lead him. And so, God is leading him.

His hesitation to receive Jesus the first time we spoke to him, was based on thinking that he needed to prepare himself so that he could be ready for God's cleansing. He told us that he knew he had done many things wrong and had been a drunkard in past years. But Pastor Rita told him that salvation was not based on his ability to clean himself up so that God would accept him, but instead, in trusting God to do the cleansing and changing of his life. The comparison here was trying to take a shower before you can take a shower.

We prayed with him to receive the Lord in his heart and then we prayed for him. While praying, the Lord spoke to Pastor Rita that the Lord had given Osekeri a gift of wisdom, which God wants to use to help the Maasai community. After this time of prayer, Osekeri was overjoyed. But then he surprised us by saying, "I only have one problem. I want to read the Bible, but I never learned to read." We immediately reassured him that we could bring him a solar powered audio Bible, and asked if he wanted it in Swahili or Maasai language. "Both!" he said enthusiastically.

He told us that he wanted to bring his family together and have us pray for them to receive Jesus. He went further to say that we can even pitch a tent (for shade) at his homestead, and he will call his extended family and neighbors together for a meeting. Then we can speak to them about Jesus and pray for their salvation. This visit is yet to take place and we are looking forward to doing so in God's timing. But it warmed our hearts to see his enthusiasm for sharing the Gospel with his family and friends. We took some photos together and bid Osekeri a warm farewell.

A feeling of calm and contentment filled our hearts as we drove back. Heading towards the city of Arusha, the sight of Mount Meru covered with clouds and the cool breeze from approaching rain made the drive especially comfortable after the heat of the day. As we drove back, I asked myself a question that stirred deep within my heart. The question was, "You have heard it said that His eyes are on the sparrow, but what is the value of one soul to the Lord?"



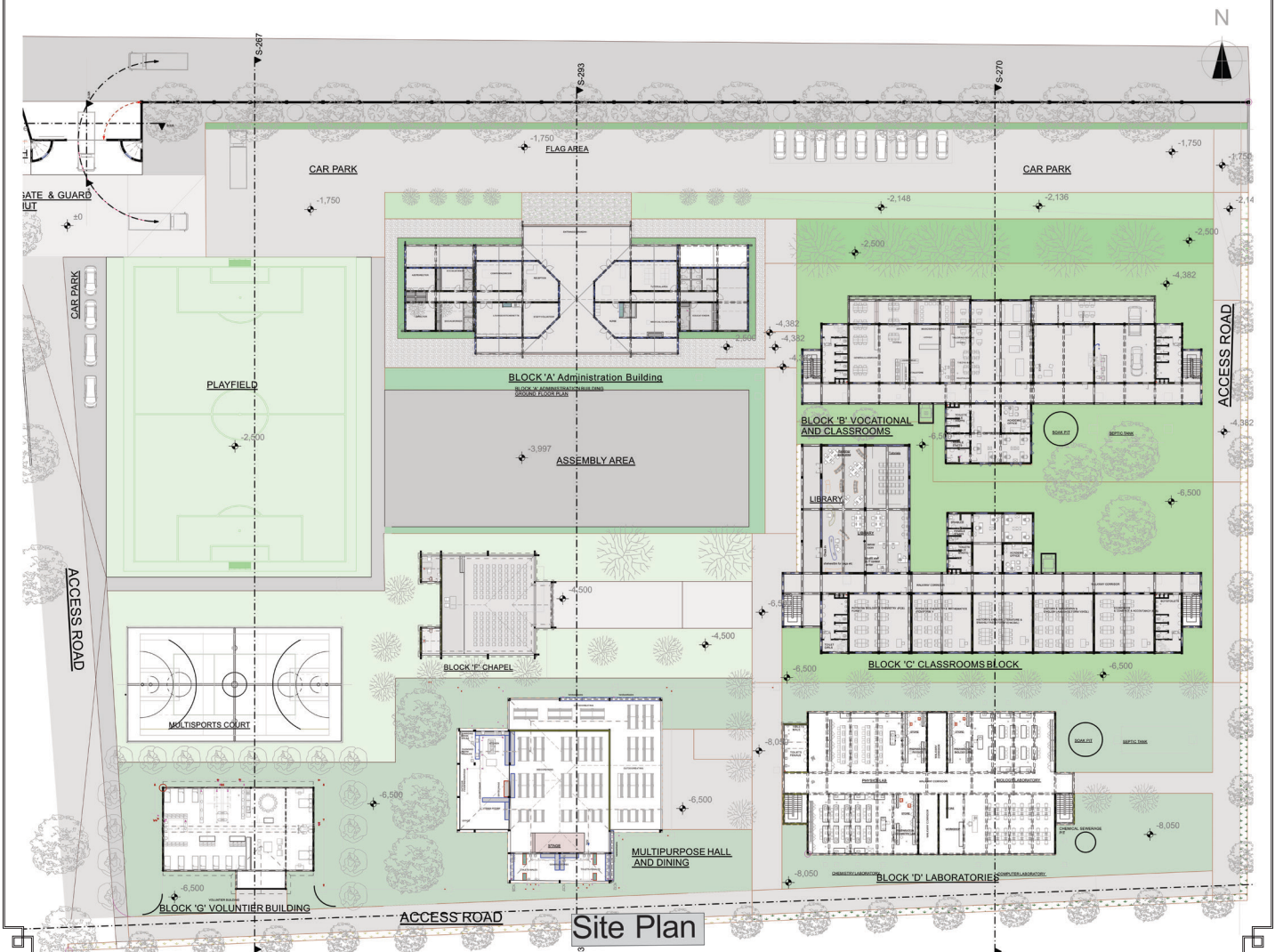
Pastor Geoffrey Kioko

"That's the way God responds every time one lost sinner repents and turns to him. He says to all his angels, 'Let's have a joyous celebration, for the one who was lost, I have found!'"

Luke 15:10 The Passion Translation

Editor's Note: Pastor Geoffrey Kioko has been an integral part of the work of Hidden with Christ Ministries in Tanzania since 2003. He is a founding Board Member of the Tanzanian organization of Hidden with Christ Ministries. He resides in Nairobi, Kenya and travels between Kenya and Tanzania to assist with this ministry.

Treasures of Africa Leadership Academy



Artist's Rendering of the Project





Treasures of Africa Leadership Academy - Phase One

The first phase of the building project will be the construction of the Administration Building (Pictured Above). This will be vital so that we can commence with hiring the Headmaster and interviewing potential teaching staff. Then the serious work of planning the school's curriculum and working with the Tanzanian Ministry of Education to make sure we are in compliance with all rules and requirements can begin.

After receiving three bids for the costs of construction of the Administration Building, we settled on one contractor with whom we were familiar and had worked with previously. He submitted the best of the three bids.

We are in need of raising \$500,000 for this first phase of construction. Will you pray and believe God with us for this need to be met immediately? We have received the Building Permit and we have less than five months to BEGIN to build or the Building Permit will be cancelled. Thank you for standing in faith with us for the completion of this project.

If you feel led to donate to the building fund for the
TREASURES OF AFRICA LEADERSHIP ACADEMY – you can do so on our
website: www.hiddenwithchrist.org/donate

Or mail a tax deductible donation to:

Hidden with Christ Ministries
P.O. Box 745
Forest, Virginia 24551

**FAITH DOES NOT OPERATE IN THE
REALM OF THE POSSIBLE.**

**THERE IS NO GLORY FOR GOD
IN THAT WHICH IS
HUMANLY POSSIBLE.**

***Faith begins where
man's power ends.***

George Muller
1805-1898
German Evangelist
famed for his faith work
with orphans in Bristol, England



I Have People...

by Rita Langeland

It was the first week of January 2011. I was sitting at my desk in the Hidden with Christ Ministries office in California praying about the New Year. Treasures of Africa Children's Home in Moshi, Tanzania, had been caring for orphans and abandoned children for almost four years. It had not been easy, but by God's grace and the generosity of many people, the children had never missed a meal or lacked other necessities.

As I prayed, I asked the Lord what He wanted for the new year. Instantly, I heard in my spirit these words, ***"I want you to buy a piece of land in Tanzania where you can build for Treasures of Africa."*** I gasped and said, "Lord, you know we have just barely been paying all the bills for Treasures as it is...how can we buy a piece of land?"

Before I could blurt out any other faithless statement, the Lord said something I will never forget all the days of my life.

"I have people...people who can hear my voice and will obey my word."

The words seemed to hang in the air. The Lord said nothing else to me that day, but that sentence was enough to ponder for a lifetime. ***"I have people..."***

It was only a few days later, as I sat at that same desk, that the office phone rang. On the other end was a man I had never met. He lived in another state and began to ask me some very direct questions.

After a few introductory pleasantries, he got right to the point of his call. "What is the biggest need of the ministry right now?" His question took me by surprise. But I heard myself answering him as if I had anticipated the inquiry.

"Two things," I replied, "Money to buy a piece of land in Tanzania for Treasures of Africa and enough funds to support our missionaries in Ukraine for a year." He then asked for the financial specifics of those two needs, and after I supplied the requested information, he thanked me and hung up.

I sat there stunned for a few minutes. I had never had such a conversation with anyone in the eleven years Hidden with Christ Ministries had been in operation. I was not in the habit of telling people the financial needs of the ministry but instead would just ask people to pray for us. As I wondered what on earth that call was all about, the words the Lord had spoken earlier in the week, floated through my mind once again, ***"I have people..."***

The following week, the Lord proved His point to me in living color. When the postman delivered the ministry's mail, along with the usual bills and advertisements, was an envelope with a smiley face drawn on the flap along with two hearts. From the return address label, I could see it was from the man I had spoken to the week prior. His wife had decorated the envelope with joyful jottings that made me smile just looking at it. But what the envelope contained was a revelation of what God had spoken and a turning point for the ministry.

“I have people...people who can hear my voice and will obey my word.”

Contained in the envelope was a check to cover one full year of support for our missionaries in Ukraine. It was the first time we had ever had the full amount in hand for their mission’s support at the beginning of the year! In addition, was a check for more than enough money to buy a piece of land in Tanzania, pay the land taxes and hire a lawyer to handle the transaction.

To say that I was stunned by this radical generosity is an understatement. The ministry had never received a gift of that size before. As I sat there staring at the miracle checks, all I could say to the Lord was, ***“You do have people!”***

Walking with the Lord for more than forty years, I have come to understand that God wants all His children to be “people who can hear His voice and will obey His word.” As pastors, my husband and I have observed while counseling many Christians over the years, that God does speak to them, though not always is His voice recognized or obeyed. Hearing God’s promptings is one thing, but obeying is another level altogether!

The biggest hindrance to stepping out in faith when you hear God’s voice is FEAR. The enemy of your soul – Satan – wants you to think you are just imagining the direction you sense you have heard from God. The fear of being “wrong” is a common human experience and often stops people from taking a step of faith. But it is far better to step out in faith to do something you believe God is leading you to do, than to do nothing. God will honor that, and you will begin to learn how to discern God’s voice from your own thoughts.

At Hidden with Christ Ministries we have been dedicated to hearing the voice of God and walking by faith to obey the Lord even when it looks impossible. When the Lord told us to establish Treasures of Africa Children’s Home in Moshi, Tanzania – we did not have the money, the language fluency or the cultural understanding to undertake such an impossible task in a foreign country. Yet obeying the Lord in that undertaking, one step at a time, brought forth miracle after miracle. The fruit of that obedience can be seen in the lives of the young “treasures” who were raised there and now are completing their academic careers and starting their lives as young leaders in Tanzania.

Now we are facing another “seemingly impossible” project at the direction of the Lord – the building of the TREASURES OF AFRICA LEADERSHIP ACADEMY, a Christian high school with a Biblical worldview and a Leadership component infused into the curriculum at each grade level. Orphans will be given scholarships to attend the school and other students will pay school fees to cover operating expenses. Using the very land that the miracle donation (described above) purchased for the ministry in 2011, we have obeyed step by step and have all the architectural plans ready to build. We have the Building Permit from the Tanzanian government in hand and await the miraculous financial provision to commence this God-ordained building project.

Will you pray with us for the people God has assigned to sow into this important work to come forth and partner with us now? We believe that this school will produce leaders for the nations who will lead with a Biblical worldview and a godly spirit. This is a desperate need in these last days.

If you feel led to donate to the building fund for the
TREASURES OF AFRICA LEADERSHIP ACADEMY – you can do so on our website:
www.hiddenwithchrist.org/donate

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www.hiddenwithchrist.org www.treasuresofafrica.org www.myeverydaybible.com

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*In Loving Memory
of*

Edward Stanley DeFoer
1938 - 2025

Beloved husband, father, grandfather and priceless friend