

Jensen Missions

Iringa, Tanzania

East Africa

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June 2011



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Shall We Imitate Denominations... Or Our Early Brethren?

by George Jensen

In America people are accustomed to having many choices. Who has not zipped into the drive through and stared at the reader board, or pushed a cart down long aisles at the mega-market passing hundreds of different items? When it comes to religion - there are choices galore. There is every imaginable denomination; many of which are splintered into various sub categories. No wonder the masses of humanity are in such a religious quandary!

Here in Africa, choices are limited, but not in the realm of religion. Mainstream denominations have long yielded their missionary influence in this land. What may surprise you is the fact that even some of the smaller religious bodies have a presence here. For example about a year or so ago, I had a study with a man who was a preacher for the Mennonite church. He had been trained in one of their schools of preaching here in Tanzania.

Another curious fact is that most religious bodies here have what might be termed a "Pentecostal Flavor." That is to say, they have a leaning toward being charismatic. Last week, there was a special meeting being held on the grounds belonging to the Catholic Church. As I drove by, I saw hundreds of people assembled. It is hard to estimate accurately, but my guess was near 1,000 people. The amplifier system was loudly broadcasting the preaching that was in progress. It sounded just like what you might expect to hear at a Pentecostal/holiness revival. My brother Charles said the Catholics must use this type of presentation to compete with the other denominations. Such "hooping and hollering" draws the crowds!

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CHILDREN'S BIBLE DRILL Several Sundays ago George began a Bible drill time before morning worship. We have noticed that some of the adults are just as much, if not more excited, as the children as they raise their hands to answer the questions. We were hoping that the adults would benefit, as we have observed the limited Bible knowledge of some of the members. Joy made bookmarks, on which there is printed a list of Old and New Testament books. We passed those out to everyone, and we are working on learning the books of the Bible, a few at a time. We have observed that attendance of children has increased since beginning the Bible Drill! We are thankful for these young souls.

Shall We Imitate Denominations...? continued

In contrast, the Lord's church has been around for about two thousand years. What worked in the first century will work still today. The power is still in the gospel (Romans 1:16). God still promises that the seekers will find (Matthew 7:7). We need not mimic the denominations. Those who are drawn by such theatrics are easily drawn to the next show in town. People seem to freely change churches as easily as they change their sandals. The true church does not need to *try* to be different - it *is* different! Neither should she try to be like false bodies. Remember Israel of old, who wished to be like the nations about her?!

Like Paul we must be busy teaching publically and from house to house (Acts 20:20). Three key qualities of "overcomers" are listed in Revelation 12:11. **First**, they have been washed (Acts 22:16), and continue to be washed (1 John 1:7) in the blood of the Lamb. **Second**, they have the courage and practice to share the message from their own lips. We will never see the church grow as God desires until each saint gives "the word of their testimony." **Third**, their commitment ran so deep that they "loved not their life even unto death." Faithful life in Christ is of more value than physical life (Cf. Matthew 10:28). We expect a missionary and a preacher to "share the gospel" from their own lips. God also expects the same from each of his children.



Journey with Joy...

The month of June has come and gone, and I'm not sure where it went! It was a busy month in many aspects.

One thing that was quite time consuming was preparing the booklet of Old Testament notes for printing. A copy was given to each student who had perfect attendance for the six-week class on Old Testament Survey. The New Testament Survey class is now underway, and I've begun work on typesetting the material for that class. It's quite an involved process: George writes the material, it goes to Charles for translation, back to me to type and format the Swahili version, then back to Charles for corrections. Once final corrections have been made, we then print a good copy and take it to a local copy shop to have the material printed and assembled into a booklet.

Irene, one of the young women with whom George had been studying, delivered her baby and so I made a baby quilt for her. The baby, born a few weeks early, was underweight and has had to remain in the hospital for a while, but we plan to visit the mother soon.

My 48th birthday was on June 25th. We actually celebrated on the 24th, since Saturdays are so busy. We enjoyed a coconut cake and homemade chocolate ice cream! That was a huge treat. George and the kids made it a point to spoil me all day long.

Jacob and Luke each delivered a lesson this month. Luke has had his nose to the grindstone with his

online schooling; this being his last semester at Amridge. Jacob accompanies George on almost all of his Bible studies. Lindsey and I work to keep everyone fed and in clean clothes. :) We've had a few incidents of stomach troubles, but those seem to be resolved for the time being. It's really no small wonder that we don't experience that more often!

In addition to completing a baby quilt for Irene, I've made a couple of hospital-type gowns for Bonnie, per her request, as well as finished another baby quilt to give away. It's always nice to have something on hand to give away when the need arises at a moment's notice, and sewing is one way I can do that. The quilt in this picture was made with some quilt pieces I received from my grandmother. When she cut these out many years ago, she never would have imagined they would be used for a quilt to cover a baby in Tanzania!



Lee and Julia are rapidly approaching their moving date, in which they will move from Oklahoma to Tennessee. They will begin classes at the East Tennessee School of Preaching and Missions in mid-August. For those who are interested, they have set up a blog to share their experience: <http://leeandjuliaparish.blogspot.com>.

Drop us a line. We'd love to hear from you!

Until next time...

Joy