

# Brooke Seekins - Missionary to Tanzania, Africa.

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Date: 09 May 2010

Preacher: Brooke Seekins

[ 0 : 00 ] All right, good morning. How are you guys doing today? You doing all right? Now, some of you guys in Sunday school, you might hear a couple repeats, but hopefully not that much. But before I get going, I want you to know how thieves work.

No, I'm just kidding. This is the logo of my ministry in Tanzania. It stands for Youth Instructed in Evangelism, Leadership, and Development. And I did not steal this sign. It was obtained legally from the Michigan Road Department after I was speaking in a church there. And that guy was like, man, you need one of those signs. And he went and asked, and they were retiring the sign for some reason.

And so it is obtained legally. I just want you to know that, okay? But I have a job for you. Are you willing? Are you willing? Oh, come on now.

Are you willing? Yes? When you see one of these that's still on the road that hasn't been retired, will you pray for me? Okay? It's simple.

[ 0 : 58 ] It's not that complicated. They're all over the place, especially if you've got to get on an interstate. When you see a yield sign, let it be a reminder, something in your head that clicks. Pray for Brooke and the youth ministry in Tanzania.

All right? That's why I carry it around for me, because you're not going to forget this very easily. Not that many people stand up with the street sign in front of the church, do they? Okay? So, that is my reminder.

Now let me get this going here. I also have another job for some of you that were not in Sunday school this morning.

Out on the display table, now you've got two tables back there, and this is okay. I'm used to sharing missionary conferences with other people. There are prayer cards.

They look like this. Little yield signs with my picture. Take one. Take it home. I am not speaking at any more churches this year. And because of that, I have like 500 prayer cards.

[ 2 : 02 ] So if you need a lot, go ahead and take a lot. Because I'm done with them, and next time I'll have to reprint them when I come back to the States. So please feel free. Take them.

Missionaries often go on refrigerators.

We know that's the place that we belong often, or cork boards or something. So that you will pray for us. And on the back is information, email addresses, a blog where you can get on there. I even, there's a video you're going to see pretty quick.

It's on YouTube. So you guys can check it out and share it with friends and family. But please take this. There's also a clipboard. And I don't know. I heard him talking about signing petitions back there and all that.

I don't know. Are you guys really going to make the effort to go back there? Because out there on the table, there is a clipboard. And I covet your prayers.

I know scripture says thou shalt not covet. But I think this is okay. I covet your prayers. And the way that you can pray educatedly is to sign up so that you get emails and you get letters that tell you what's going on.

[ 3 : 07 ] That way you can say, oh, there's a Yiltsin. We're going to pray for it. Just don't say, oh, God, help Brooke in Tanzania, you know. I mean, yeah, that's better than nothing. But, oh, Lord, please help this and this and this.

Because I read about it in an email that she sent. And it's a real need right now. So that's why there's a clipboard. That's why we want you to sign up. Any missionary wants your prayers. And the way you can know how to pray is by getting emails all of the time.

Okay? So we're going to put you to work by praying for those emails. Now, I work with an organization called Grace Ministries International in Tanzania. Somebody was asking me earlier. I have been in Tanzania since 2001. In fact, I was on my way there on 9-11. When I'm in Tanzania, we all speak Swahili over there. So the title of my position is the M'shauri Waidara Yavijana. You catch that? M'shauri Waidara Yavijana. It means the advisor to the youth department. That is my job. In Tanzania, we have 70 grace churches.

[ 4 : 13 ] And in those 70 grace churches, by law, we have to be registered with the government as a denomination. Now, I know that goes against what normal grace churches do because we're non-denominational.

But the laws of Tanzania are different. And you have to conform to their laws in order to do ministry. And one of the things we are is we are a registered denomination called the Grace Church of Tanzania. And within the Grace Church of Tanzania, we have structure.

We have leaders. We have representatives. And we have different departments that help all 70 churches. So what happens is we have 70 churches and we want youth ministries in all 70 churches.

So they chose a pastor, elected him, and appointed him to help youth ministry in all of those churches. And then they ask different missionaries to advise different areas of the church.

And my job is to advise, especially the guy that's in charge, but also youth pastors, to advise, to give them advice, to help them know how to run youth ministries in Tanzania.

[ 5 : 10 ] Now, let me ask. Ladies especially here, how many of you guys like to give your advice? Yeah? Your opinions? Yeah? I mean, guys do. But for some reason, I get more ladies saying, we all like to give our opinion.

Well, you know, I think you should do it that way. Well, guess what? That's my job. That's my title. So it's kind of handy. I get pastors that come up and say, you know, I need advice on doing this with the youth in my church.

I get young men that come up to me and they're single and they said, well, I'm Shauri. That's what they call me, the advisor. How am I supposed to get my wife?

Now, for you guys, when you want a wife, what's the first thing you do? You start dating. You start looking, right? Well, these guys, they've kind of looked. They've kind of picked out the girl they want.

But in Tanzania, they can never talk to the in-laws. That's one of the taboos of their culture. See, it took me several years to learn their dating culture. So, never in-laws. In fact, today, who was it?

[ 6 : 13 ] You were talking to your mother-in-law? That would never, ever, ever happen in Tanzania. In fact, when you met her, you would be on your knees greeting her like this. And she would be on her knees talking to you.

And the opposite gender, there's things you would never eat with her your entire life. There's all of these things. Guys, your daughter-in-laws could never, ever eat with you. Mothers, your son-in-laws would not be at this dinner with you today, even though it would be in your honor.

They would be eating in another room. There's these cultural, they're built in. I can't do anything about that. That's how it is. So, here in America, when you talk to youth and you talk, you know, well, you know, you want to make sure your family knows your girlfriend.

So they can advise you in your relationship, right? Parents, that's a good thing. Well, over there, that doesn't work. So we talk about different things. And young men, if you guys want a wife, you better start saving up.

Because it costs at least a year's minimum wage. To pay for that wife. That's the culture. They pay for a wife. And it shouldn't really be the guy paying for his bride.

[ 7 : 25 ] It should be your dad and all of his brothers and all of his uncles paying her dad and all of his brothers and all of his uncles. See, it's a family. It's like a contract between these two families.

Well, these young men come to me and they say, my dad, he isn't saved. You know, he's involved in even witchcraft and stuff. And I really would like to marry this girl. And I know that you keep teaching us about waiting until we get married and all this.

And God wants us to have a wedding in the church. And, you know, like some of the things that you and I consider normal. He's like, but I can't. I can't pay for her. My dad won't help me.

He just said, just take her. Because the night that you sleep in a guy's house, you're his wife.

There's no living together in Tanzania. If you start living together, you're considered married by a

tradition.

And so these pagan parents encourage their kids, well, you just take her and live with her. And, yeah, they'll say you owe so much money, but, you know, you can pay that off maybe, whatever. Well, then by doing that, you have no marriage counseling.

[ 8 : 28 ] You haven't had a ceremony in front of all your family and the church, in a way, getting a blessing from your parents, from your pastors and all that. And so these young men are frustrated because from church, they're hearing, this is God's plan for marriage.

But from home, from their pagan family, no, I'll just do this. And these guys come up to me and they ask for advice. Well, how are we supposed to do that? And that's a difficult question because I can't, you know, I think part of them said, oh, why don't you give me 350 bucks in order to...

I'm not going to do that. They need to figure it out on their own. But I get to share the story of Jacob. You guys know Jacob, right?

He ended up getting two wives. I don't talk about the two-wife part. But polygamy is practiced over there. And we have several kids, especially these kids that come ask. Often their mother is the unfavorite mother because dad took a second wife.

And now dad likes the second wife more. And he'll help the kids of the second wife. But he's not going to help the kids of the first wife. Things like that. And so we say, you know what? Jacob, he met Laban and he wanted to marry Rachel.

[ 9 : 34 ] What did he do? How did he get Rachel? He had to work. For how long? Seven years. He waited seven years before he got his bride.

Now we don't go into the rest of the story where Laban messed up, you know, kind of made a mess out of it and gave him the other wife. And then he got the other wife. We don't talk about that because our point in the teaching is that he waited seven years.

And very, very often I use that story with these young men and young women saying, you know what? Jacob waited seven years to get that wife. You can wait two or three if that's how long it's going to take you to get the cows and the goats and the cloth and the axe heads and the hoes and all the money that you need to pay for that wife.

So, I don't know. It's a minimum wage in the village is about \$350. And I watched a young man get married and I knew him quite well and he showed me the gifts.

And when we did the math, it was a little bit over minimum wage in the village prices. Now, it was in products and money and goats and cows and all that stuff. But these are problems the kids face over there.

[ 10 : 42 ] And it took me a long time to figure out. And I'm still figuring out some of their culture things. But I get to give advice. And I pray that I can give them advice that matches scripture but doesn't go against their culture.

Because I don't want to give them American scriptural advice. I want to give advice. I want to give them godly Tanzanian scriptural advice. Because in a lot of ways we affect our culture.

And that's one of the hardest things a missionary has. Is to figure out what is my American culture and what is God's culture. It's very difficult. Very, very difficult.

There's a lot of things that you are doing right now in your church that are American culture.

Because if you were in Tanzania, in the church where I attend, all the women would be on this side and all the guys would be on that side. I don't know why, but that's their culture.

You never go to church with your husband or your wife. And if you do, you don't sit by each other. You just kind of walk there and walk back if you're lucky. Everything else is separate. Things are different. I get to give advice.

[ 11 : 45 ] That's my job. Now, it's not always easy, but hopefully I'm getting to know Tanzanians enough that I can learn their culture in order to give that advice. Now, when you have 70 churches, that's a lot.

I don't teach a youth group. You guys have a youth group here? Kind of? You have a youth leader? Yeah? You got the guy, right?

Well, I'm not the one that does the youth leading because I have 70 churches. I train the leaders who will train the youth leaders. Does that make sense? Because I can't be 70 places at once.

And we have a rule as a mission that if there's something a national can do, then the missionary shouldn't do it. The missionary should let the national. Now, I can help. If they ask me to fill in for a week, I can do that.

But I can't go to my church that I usually attend and say I'll lead youth group every week, even though I could physically do it and probably do it better than the guy that's in charge right now. [12:42] But my job is to train the leaders and let the Tanzanians run the show. And I just advise them. And that's difficult sometimes because sometimes I feel like, man, I could do that so much better.

But I have to let them do their job and I have to give advice and help push them along so that they can run it on their own one day. Now, how many of you guys can read this? Can you read that? Okay, I want to have you read this with me. If you can't read that, it's in Ephesians chapter 3, verse 20 and 21. You can follow along in your Bibles.

But I want you guys to read this with me. And when we come to the yellow, you're going to emphasize those words. Can you handle that? Okay, let's read together. Ephesians 3, 20 and 21. Now unto him that is able to do exceedingly, abundantly, above all that we ask or think, according to the power that works in us.

[13:43] Unto him be glory in the church by Christ Jesus to all generations forever and ever. Amen.

Now I know you've heard those verses many times. And the reason I have them in the show today is that I want you to rejoice with me over some things that the Lord has been doing.

A year ago, actually a little over a year ago, started this cycle of this crazy year of busyness for me and my life. You see, my ministry is very event orientated.

And you're going to see that in a minute. I jump from one event to the next event to the next event. And in between, I plan and prepare all of those events. We have events like marriage camp and youth camp and worship seminars and things like that.

Last May, we ran marriage camps in three different locations, three different weeks, taking different leaders to each week. And as I was going to the first week of marriage camp, I wondered, you know, is this going to be the same?

[14:45] You prepare booklets so that every camper can have booklets and all these things. But I have no idea how many people are coming to camp. Even though I asked them to pre-register, that's just not an African thing. So often I think, well, maybe 40 people, maybe 50, because some churches are learning how to respond to help me.

So I printed about 50 booklets for the first week of marriage camp. We've never had more than 40 people at marriage camp before. I printed 50 booklets knowing that these couples would come. And then the first night they come and we just do dinner and an evening service to make sure everybody's arrived so that we can start bright and early the next morning. Well, that night they're doing the evening service and we're doing a head count.

And we realized we have like 70 people at camp. And I only have 50 booklets. So this is when panic starts setting in. What are you going to do? You're going to make people share booklets even though couples have separate classes and all this stuff?

And thank goodness that camp was near my house. And so I quick ran home and we did have generator power that night too by those people that were in Sunday school class. And I was able to print like 30 or 40 more booklets just for that camp.

[15:49] Now we've never had more than 35. We had 70 people at our marriage camp last year. In the first week. God brought more people to camp than we'd ever had before.

He brought people of all ages into this camp. We even had a guy who was a pastor. He'd been trained and he'd been pastoring a church. And while he was pastoring a church he had an affair with a lady and took a second wife and obviously quit pastoring the church.

And that was I kind of came about that time that happened. So I didn't really I'd never really met the guy. I'd heard his name and all this stuff. And he but he was starting to get back out with the Lord and came to camp with his first wife.

And during just the first couple days of camp he pulled the pastors aside that were teaching the classes and said you know this is so good. I need to get my life back on track with the Lord. I'm going to will you guys help me after camps over just to get my back life back on track with God. And so they did they followed up with him and I don't know where it's at right now because that is not part of my responsibility.

[16:48] But God touched a heart of somebody who had backslidden during that camp. And the next week we broke numbers and we went to a place we had no we went to a church like you guys

and we invited surrounding churches to come to marriage camp.

And usually what happens is we have like widows or younger people cook the food so that the couples can go to camp. Well we let people come to camp last year even without their spouse because we have so many women whose husbands don't go to church that they were missing out. And they really wanted to have training in marriage. And so we let them come in and we went to the church and they said we don't have anybody to cook the food. Everybody wants to go to camp. Well you got to cook so we can have somebody.

So they talked there was like two 15 16 year old girls helping cook for like 40 people. And then they talked to some neighboring churches and asked friends of theirs from different churches to help cook so that their church could have this event.

Isn't that a great problem to have that people want to come and they want to learn over and over. God was reminding me that he can do exceedingly abundantly above all that we ask or think.

[ 17 : 54 ] I had expectations for camp. You do when you prepare an event. I printed 50 books. I thought that would be enough. It wasn't enough. God did more than I expected. He did more than I expected.

And this verse kept ringing through my head over and over that God can do exceedingly abundantly beyond my imaginations beyond my expectations. And then we like three weeks after marriage camp we got it going into our youth camps.

We did youth camp last year. We broke numbers again. God brought more kids than we never had. One week alone was 143 kids. Typically we have 80 or 90. Now I did print enough books that week. Over three weeks of camp and about 300 and some kids we brought them through different workshops and stuff.

And one of the workshops was specifically geared to talk about the lies that they believed about the gospel. So many of our kids come to church because we have certain choirs.

I mean there's like five choirs that sing in the church I go to every single Sunday. Five choirs every single Sunday. Youth and kids and women and older young people and all this stuff anyways.

[ 19 : 00 ] Lots and lots of choirs. They come because they want to be part of the choir. They want to be part of this exciting thing that's going on. And they think well I'll quit drinking and I'll quit doing this and I'll join the church and then well yeah I'm a Christian.

Or we have kids that grew up and mom and dad are you know elders in the church or active members of the church. Yeah I go to church all the time. See I'm a Christian. I'm not a Muslim. I'm not a you know. And so we talked to them.

Are you trusting this for your salvation? Guess what? That's not enough. If you think that you're going to heaven because mom and dad are faithful you're going to hell. And we point blank hit these with these kids.

And we said the only way is for you yourself to recognize that you need a savior. And that Christ died for your sins to save you. You yourself have to talk to Christ about that.

And over the process of three weeks 85 kids came to know the Lord because of that class. God is good isn't he? I expected 20 maybe 30.

[ 20 : 02 ] My numbers were blown out of the water. God did exceedingly abundantly above anything that I could have anticipated. And all of that stuff. Now missionaries when we talk we always say me or I or.

That's kind of the nature of giving a presentation. But make Christ be glorified. You're going to see stuff that's going on in Tanzania. Make God be glorified. You have to know that it's Christ working through me and through the Tanzanians that I'm working with.

To accomplish all of these things. It's really God doing it. And he keeps just challenging me to set higher goals. Because he can do more. And I can set a goal here. And he can do more.

And I can set a goal and he can do. Until I physically cannot set any higher goals. And yet God can do even more. He's so amazing. And then right after youth camp got over like three weeks later we went into a worship camp.

A worship seminar. We'd never done this before. We had no idea how many people would come. We had no idea how it would go. It was really an experiment. It's something that's going to take off and we're going to be doing every other summer now.

[ 21 : 07 ] But we didn't know. The first time is a little scary. And we ended up having 70 people come. And they represented all these regions from our churches. In fact one church sent an elder

and a young man who plays instruments from their church.

They walked three days to get to the seminar. How far did you walk to church today? Huh?

Anybody? I mean you walked from your house to your car and your car to the church.

That's it right? For most of you? Three days they came to the seminar. I did not expect the church that far away to come. I knew the churches close by would come.

People that walk eight or nine hours. That's normal. But three days? Beyond my expectations. God does exceedingly abundantly. Beyond what we can do.

Or ask. And that's why I have this verse. I wanted to share that with you. That was just over this past last summer. And now I'm about ready to go into my new summer of activities with youth camps and marriage camps.

[ 22 : 08 ] And I have no idea what to expect. And it's kind of exciting. It's a little scary. Because I may have to run home and print more booklets. And that doesn't work sometimes logistically.

But I know that God can do more than I can imagine. And that's encouraging to me. Now watch this video and you're going to learn everything. Everybody said that anybody could do.

He had a good thing. Somebody should. Everybody knows that anybody could do. All the good things that don't bathe did. Well the preacher came to me and said.

What I ought to do. If I wanted to make my religion. You can do it himself. But you really didn't have it. And he said that the duty wasn't mine. What do you want to do?

Sorry. That's my fault. Sorry. Sorry. Everybody said that anybody could do.

[ 23 : 12 ] He had a good thing. Somebody should. Everybody knows that anybody could do. All the good things that don't bathe did. When the preacher came to me and said.

What I ought to do. If I wanted to make my religion. So he do it himself. But you really didn't have it. And he said that the duty wasn't mine. Oh no.

Everybody said that anybody could do. And me. Oh. Not I. Everybody knows that anybody could do. All the good things that don't bathe did.

Why me? Everybody said that anybody could do. Oh no. Come on everyone. Come on everyone.

Come on everyone. Somebody should. You could. Everybody knows that anybody could do. All the good things that don't bathe did.

Well the chicken came by and said. Give me a hand. If you want me. Go in. You will promise that. Here is something that I don't have time to do. So I better give it to you.

[ 24 : 07 ] Oh no. Everybody said that anybody could do. He had mates in need. Somebody should. Everybody knows that anybody could do. This is an animal to bathe did.

Not him. Everybody said that anybody could do. He had mates in need. Something should.

Everybody knows that anybody could do. This is an animal to bathe did.

Well I'm too busy so I tell everybody. Your work's got to get done by somebody. It could be done by anybody but nobody, nobody, nobody, nobody, nobody did.

Liar content and■■■■, obnoxious food and dough with d■■s and -" One day Beim proof and lebrun Commission like Vancouver ■■■■influses, Thank you.

Thank you.

[ 26 : 29 ] Thank you.

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Thank you, Lord, for you, Lord, for you, Lord, for you, for you. Thank you, Lord, for you.