

LIGHT BEARERS MINISTRY MISSION UPDATE

January 2004

2004 CONVOCAATION SCHEDULE

5th Annual East Coast Convocation
Fletcher, North Carolina
June 28–July 3, 2004

20th Annual Convocation
Malo, Washington
July 6-10, 2004

WITCHES, MALARIA & COWS . . .

by Herb Montgomery

Far away, in a village dominated by witches, some of the young village girls accepted Jesus as their Savior, due to the efforts of a lay minister. Upon hearing the news, the village witches planned to kill the young girls and, of all things, “eat them raw.” Two villagers were killed to strike fear into the hearts of the young girls, but to no avail. The witches set out to carry forward their plan of killing the nineteen who had accepted the Adventist faith, when, for no apparent reason, two of the witches fell over dead. To say the least, the witches abandoned their plan, and Adventism is growing in this small village.

As I was growing up in a small, sheltered American town, exciting evangelism stories such as this always settled just beyond my comprehension. Where on earth do things like this happen? The answer this time is in South-West Tanzania.

Recently I was blessed by a report from their Director of Personal Ministries on the work that literature from Light Bearers Ministry is doing in that area. For years, not a lot has been done to reach the coastal regions of South-West Tanzania. The obstacles are many. These are remote reaches with impassible roads. Nomadic tribes that move constantly with their cattle herds compose the population. This area poses a high risk of malaria, and let us not forget that a high concentration of these people practice witchcraft. Hardship, disease, inaccessibility, exorbitant expenses, and threat of death all come together to produce unique challenges for a living preacher to reach this area.



Yet, despite all of these factors, by the grace of God, special attention has been given to the coastal areas of South-West Tanzania in this past year. Calls went out, resulting in dedicated lay missionary families moving into the area. Even though many of these villages can only be reached by canoe, the families sought them out and took with them tracts and booklets, many of which were printed by Light Bearers Ministry. Classes were then started in the villages, while lay missionaries went house-to-house, opening the Bible to the people. The reports are incredible. Within a few months, the families there had assembled a good-sized group that met to worship under some mango trees.



Then public efforts were conducted, along with community services. I marveled at photos of PA systems being carried on donkeys, and other photos of lay missionaries on foot with literature packed on their backs and both hands full, walking to conduct one of these such efforts. The series at which the donkey transported their equipment resulted in 23 people making decisions for Christ; but the result of the effort where everything had to be carried in on foot was 75 people who made decisions to follow our Lord. After these efforts were finished, churches were built that take only five days to construct. These are primarily brick structures with metal roofs. I also saw

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pictures of men and women carrying logs used for burning the bricks, of an old tractor used to carry the finished bricks to the building site and of children carrying bricks and straw for the roofs. In one area, decisions were made to follow Jesus as a direct result of helping to build the church building. When the work had been established, the lay missionary family moved on to the next village to start all over again.

As exciting as all this sounds, the challenges were tremendous. In one village, the people who practiced witchcraft tried to kill the lay missionary family, their team members, and the pastor. Their efforts were all in vain. A number of team members in another area spent long weeks in bed suffering from malaria.

Most outlying areas take at least six hours to reach on foot; therefore, the lack of reliable transportation can slow the work to a crawl. Nonetheless, it is exciting to see pictures of lay workers transporting box after box of the literature that was here in our pressroom just months ago. To think that God can take such silent messengers as our printed tracts, transport them across thousands of miles and, with the cooperation of dedicated souls on that end, place them in the hands of individuals whose hearts had



recently only known witchcraft but who now burn within with the message of His love for them! The most thrilling pictures are the ones of believers standing around fires and, having given their hearts to Jesus, are now burning everything they had previously used in practicing witchcraft.

We invite your prayers and support. One of the goals of these lay missionary families for this coming year is for the village of Mpuyi, which is a witch village that came into existence when the government collected witches from different villages and placed them there. A second goal is to reach the area of Makonde, which can only be entered by walking over thirty miles. Other villagers have heard of the evangelism and churches in neighboring villages and are requesting that efforts be conducted in their villages as well.

Another goal is to reach the villagers in the area of Sumbawanga (which means “to throw witchcraft”). A lay worker had been sent there. The first evening he was there,

a group of witches moved into his house. He could hear them playing drums and talking to each other, but he could not see them. The witches then started moving furniture, dancing and making a lot of noise, but still the lay worker could not see them. They then moved into the bedroom. The lay worker took his Bible and some Bible lessons we had sent them, and approached where the witches seemed to be and thanked them for welcoming him with drums and dancing. He then began reading his Bible to them and preaching to them about the love of Jesus. When they heard this, the drumbeats ceased; they kept quiet and listened. On the Sabbath, a visitor came to worship with the lay worker. The new believer gave his testimony that he had been among those witches who had visited him on that particular night. The number of believers has gradually increased and now there is need of building a church.

Other goals include reaching villages that are famous for their mosquitoes (i.e., malaria), and a village dominated by witches (where the threat has been made to eat any missionaries raw), plus another area that is also only reachable by walking 60 miles. All of these goals are in addition to the many church-building projects that are in the plans resulting from literature that was shared where no actual meetings could take place.

I would like to thank you for your support of Light Bearers Ministry. Without the gospel in its written form (i.e., literature), the work in South-West Tanzania would be greatly hindered. The Personal Ministries Director closed his report with a most appropriate verse from Isaiah. I believe I will end this report with it as well:

“The people that *walked* in *darkness* have seen a great *light*; they that dwell in the land of the *shadow of death*, upon them hath the *light* shined” (Isaiah 9:2, emphasis added).

May God continue His ministry of grace in your lives as He is working in the lives of our brothers and sisters around the world.



Events Schedule

- ◆ **January 30-31**
Castle Rock SDA Church, WA
Ty Gibson—☎(360)274-6090
- ◆ **January 31**
Republic SDA Church, WA
James Rafferty—☎(509)779-4444
- ◆ **February 6-7**
Myrtle Creek SDA Church, OR
Ty Gibson—☎(541)839-6800 or 863-5183
- ◆ **February 7**
3ABN Rally, Seattle, WA
James & Risë Rafferty—☎(800)752-3226
- ◆ **February 27-28**
Dallas North Brazilian SDA Church, TX
Herb Montgomery—☎(972)234-1117
- ◆ **March 18-28**
Peru Evangelism—The Quiet Hour
Ty Gibson—☎(800)242-2322
- ◆ **March 19–April 3**
Minden, LA Evangelism
Herb Montgomery—☎(318)371-9572
- ◆ **April 17**
Spirit Lake SDA Church, ID
James Rafferty—☎(208)683-2998
- ◆ **April 23–May 1**
OCI Retreat, Fountainview Academy
Ty Gibson—☎(250)256-7184

Lift Him Up

3ABN Schedule
(Sky Angel Channel 9710)

Tuesday	4:30 p.m. (PST) 10:30 p.m. (PST)
Thursday	11:00 a.m. (PST)
Saturday	10:30 a.m. (PST)

Published by Light Bearers Ministry

Light Bearers is a non-profit ministry, devoted to helping proclaim the gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ through the spoken and published word. Donations made to Light Bearers Ministry are tax-deductible.

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