



The Tate's

Starting N.T. Churches in Kenya



Missionaries to Kenya, East Africa

March, 2017

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Re-evaluating Ministry

I guess it's time for me to step back again and reevaluate what we've been doing in this ministry...and where the ministry is going. We want to see people who don't know Jesus being saved. We also want to see New Testament churches of the Lord Jesus Christ being established and growing. I feel that in these endeavors I have been stymied and blockaded by insurmountable challenges.

The first three years in Kenya: During these three years we took a "traditional" approach. A quick summary of the traditional approach includes paying pastors a salary, funding all ministries, building new church buildings, etc. It basically means that the missionary is paying for, and funding everything the church/ministry is doing. What stymied us in this approach? In a word, DEPENDENCY. You've heard me talk about it a hundred times. It builds dependency into the churches and this dependency paralyzes the churches from doing the work of the ministry themselves. It kills the growth and reproduction of the church from the very beginning. "Dependency" has almost become a curse word to me.

The next three years in Kenya: During

these three years I reacted to the problem of dependency and tried to change accordingly. To accomplish this we really changed our approach to ministry dramatically. I decided to model for the Kenyan Christians only what they could reproduce on their own. We started groups and churches that met in people's homes. We worked with "lay" pastors that ministered without pay. We worshiped without instruments. In short, I only did what the Kenyan Christians could do without western support and money. What stymied us in this approach? Something similar to dependency, but slightly different. I would summarize it in one word: EXPECTATIONS. Yes, it seems expectations would kill the groups and churches every time. Each time we would start a group we would have many people coming initially. They said they loved the simple and pure Bible teaching and they were learning a lot. They said they loved the simplicity of the worship and meetings as opposed to the "machine" of the local churches. But they always came with expectations. Expectations that we would give them money, gifts, food, school fees, business start up money, etc. As soon as they realized these expectations would not be met, they were gone. "Expectations" is the next

ministry curse word to me.

The last three years: During these years I changed my approach once again. I wanted to avoid the dependency and expectations. I decided to teach and disciple men to go out into the villages and start the churches on their own. In this way my presence would not adversely affect the new church start-ups. What stymied us in this approach? I can't summarize it in one word but in effect I could not find men interested enough in starting churches from scratch in people's homes. It was not lucrative enough for them. Church work and ministry here is a business and if the business isn't providing enough profit then it should be scrapped. I guess I could say in two words that my approach was BAD BUSINESS.

My parents are arriving in Kenya in two weeks. I think their arrival in the country is timely. I am looking forward to sitting down with them and with my wife and getting their input and wisdom. My wife and my mother and father are godly and wise people whose input and help I desire and want. I am hoping that the discussions I might have with them over the next month will be used by God to help direct our future ministry here in Kenya.