

It's All in the Journey

"Cruzando"...it means "journey with Jesus." I am writing this as we head to the ELCA Youth Gathering in San Antonio. "Cruzando" is this year's theme.

I pray that all of our youth and their counselors will journey with Jesus, and that it will be a safe and rewarding trip. I think of the former bishop in our companion synod in Tanzania, Bishop Maghina, who would always lead a prayer in the car before we began a journey. Some suggested it was because of his driving ability or perhaps because of the difficult and dangerous roads. I suspect it was really reflective of his prayer discipline all through the journey of life.

I love these youth gatherings. To join with the youth as they sing and dance, worship with shouts and silence (their silence is deafening), pray with all the emotion a young life can handle, and offer service in the midst of 100 degree days -- all part of journeying with Jesus. But it doesn't happen only in San Antonio

I listened to one young woman recounting her experience on a youth trip to Colorado. The joy was indelible on her face. And to hear another story of a group that was rock climbing; the pastor recounted that the first one over the 100 foot rock face was the quietest person in the group. And how her example brought that group into a community they could never have imagined. Another apologized for talking so much, recounting the experience of a work camp in a Native American village and how a villager had shared, "forget the building and painting...just get to know us." Those are stories filled with Jesus.

Summer is a wonderful opportunity for our congregations to experience journeying with each other...and with Jesus. It can set the tone for ministry throughout the coming year. "Cruzando!"

Shalom,



Harold Usgaard
Bishop



From the Home of Mayo Clinic to the Clinics of Tanzania

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After a whirlwind 18-day trip to Tanzania, there's only one conclusion which can be made: We have it pretty good here, a discovery made recently by a 21-person mission group from Bethel Lutheran Church, whose mission was to fix and clean-up three dispensaries. They are called dispensaries in Tanzania, but we refer to them as clinics.

We take it for granted, but our hospitals and clinics have walls with no cracks. And the roofs don't leak.

Bedding and pillows are readily available. There are mattresses. Most patients aren't starving. We have water, and it's not contaminated.

Windows here have glass or screens. We have electricity. We have lights.

Drugs and medicine are available at the local pharmacy, and if we needed mosquito nets, presumably they would be available.

Our walls are painted, if not decorated.

There are no hornet nests in the rafters in our delivery rooms and, generally speaking, microscopes and all of the lab equipment is functional.

And, oh yes, our toilets flush. There is running water.

Not so when you travel deep inside Tanzania, or what is referred to as the "bush" country . . . and with good reason.

Imagine the worst roads you've ever traveled, and then multiply those conditions by, oh say, 50 per cent. These are the main thoroughfares.

Undaunted, the group pressed on.

Our main group was divided into three teams of seven, with assignments at the Mukuru Dispensary, Merya Dispensary and the Sepuka Dispensary. A typical clinic sees between 15-20 outpatients per day and do 10-12 deliveries per month.

This was the third mission trip Bethel has taken to Tanzania under the direction of Pastor Linda Helberg. Bethel works alongside the Evangelical Lutheran Church of Tanzania which oversees 14 dispensaries and the work is over half done -- eight dispensaries have received much-needed attention.