

Church Begins in the Home

I was both humbled and amazed when I showed up at his home. Joseph is a young man living in Nairobi, Kenya. His daily routine includes milking a cow and goats as well as tending a garden on an estate. He invited me and the local pastor from Nairobi into his home: a one-window, concrete-walled room no bigger than a box truck. Sitting knee to knee he offered us tea and told us his story. He is the eighth of eight children, raised by his oldest sister. His parents passed away before he knew them. As a child, he learned how to work and paid for his own schooling through grade twelve.

“Did you go to church as a child?” I asked. “No,” he said, “We did not go to church. A friend invited me to the Mormon Church. I went for a while. But they taught from books that were not the Bible. Another friend invited me to a Seventh-Day Adventist church, but they did not teach much about Jesus.”

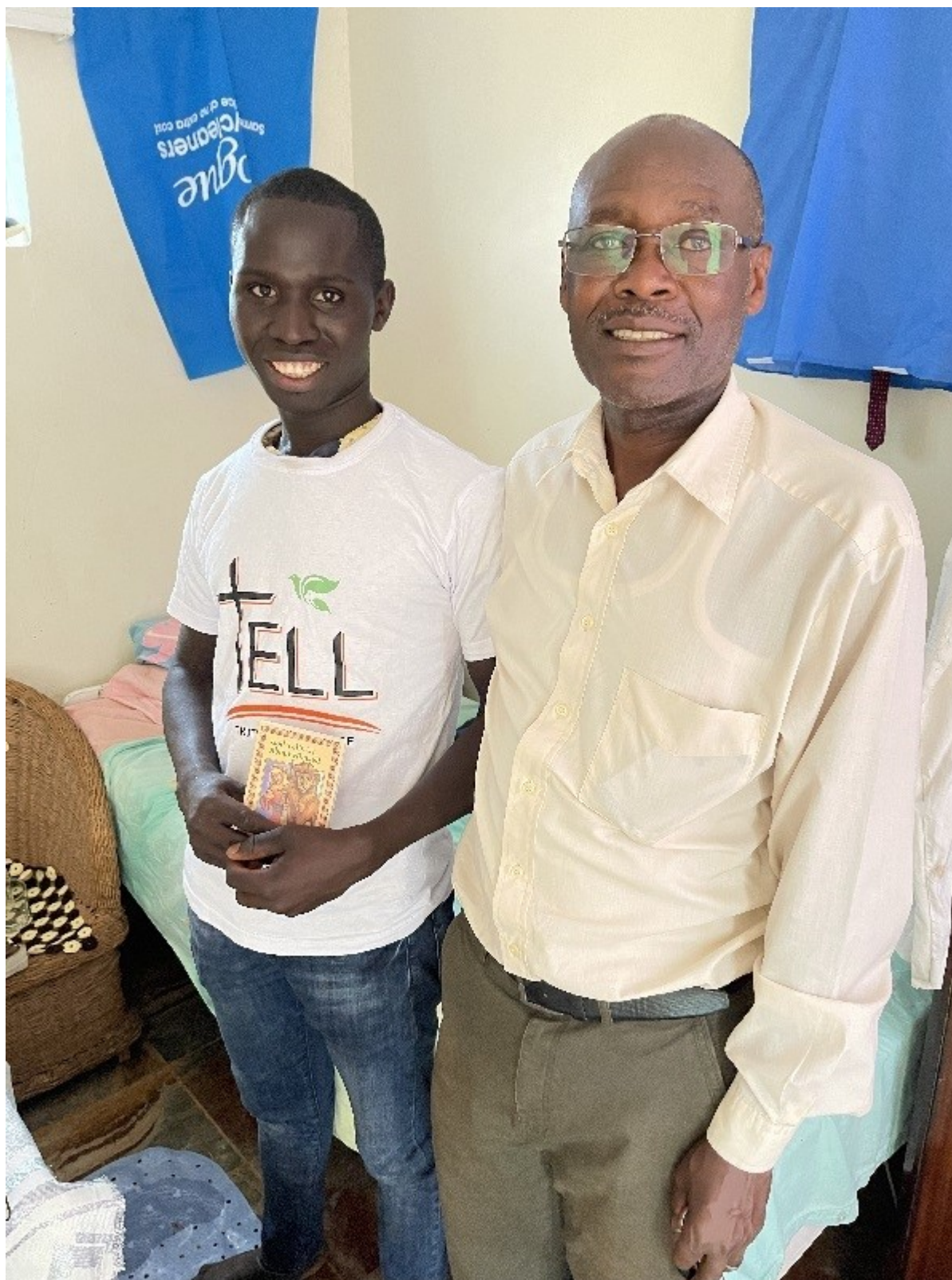


Joseph and TELL Missionary Dan Laitinen

"Are you going to church now?" I asked. "I am," he replied, "with you and the teachers at TELL Network." Over a year ago Joseph stumbled across a Facebook ad for TELL and had to see what it was all about. After completing the three self-study

courses he began live group classes with a pastor, studying the Bible and Lutheran catechism on Zoom. He formed friendships with students thousands of miles away. His best friend is from Trinidad. They make TELL t-shirts and share what they're learning with others. For over a year Joseph grew in knowledge and confidence to share his faith in an online classroom.

Today we finally had a Bible study together in the flesh. We read, asked questions, and discussed. Joseph could identify that sin was the problem and God's grace was the solution. He has learned how to read the Bible *and* express his faith to others. Throughout our visit, we encouraged Joseph in his studies, introduced him to the local church, and presented the next steps for him to gather in a Bible study group.



Joseph and Rev. Mark Anariko Onunda, the President of the LCMC-Kenya

As our time came to an end my pastor friend had to share his own story with Joseph. He too was orphaned as a young child. Raised by his grandmother, he stumbled across a Lutheran church when he heard music from inside. He had to see what it

was all about. There he found Jesus. Today he is pastoring and planting many churches in Kenya. He encouraged Joseph: "Continue learning with TELL. Follow their path and gather a Bible study group. I can tell you from my experience: it starts right here," he said pointing to the floor. "Church begins in the home."

I feel I took away more from that visit than I contributed. God meets us with his Word in rooms no bigger than a box truck. Jesus calls, gathers, and grows his church within our communities: online and in-person. How humbling, amazing and true: Church begins in the home.

TELL Missionary Dan Laitinen is based in Austin, TX

Please pray for those working in fields that are ripe for harvest. Share their story, engage with future news and receive updates. Learn more about our mission fields in Africa and how the Holy Spirit is working faith in people's hearts at <https://wels.net/serving-others/missions/africa>