

## **WORD OF LIFE KENYA**

### **Report #K31**

#### **ABSTRACT**

Word of Life is an American-based organization whose main mission is to evangelize and disciple youth so that they may reach their own generation. Word of Life Kenya has had to push through some setbacks because of some cultural biases in the way that it was set up, but nevertheless, the organization is still accomplishing its mission. Because of the strategic location of Word of Life Mombasa, it has been able to reach the Islamic community and has made such an impact in the community that they are revered as a household name. Through sports ministries, schooling, training and most importantly, camps, Word of Life Mombasa has been able to bring the gospel to its community in a relevant manner while also respecting the culture. The organization suffers some financial constraints and domestic threats such as attacks from anti-government groups and so they have had to adjust their plan on how to wisely use their resources in the most beneficial manner. Even though they are a youth ministry and trends keep on changing, Word of Life Kenya has made a commitment never to change their stance on the Word of God.

#### **HISTORY**

A businessman, Jack Wyrzten, who was also an evangelist, started Word of Life in the early forties in the United States. He preached a number of times at Madison Square Church. He later bought property in Schroon Lake, New York and there he started a camp called Word of Life Island where he brought kids and evangelized to them. Later they saw the need to extend the vision to other countries and Word of Life went to Brazil and then spread to other countries. In 1971, Word of Life Kenya was born with the idea of reaching young people with the gospel. Word of Life bought property in Kabete in 1971, and in 1982 they bought another property in Mombasa. Vick Paul was instrumental in setting up Word of Life Kenya, and the first director was Larry Lochem. They had a few foreign directors, but the first African director was Danson Wambua in Mombasa and Chris Mwala in Nairobi. Currently, Word of Life Mombasa has Pastor Peter Wabuti Odanga as the director. (For further information of Odanga, see below.)

Some significant milestones that they have had are the enrollment numbers in the school at Word of Life. They have more demand than they can meet for children wanting to attend the schools, which is encouraging but also disappointing because they cannot meet the need. They are also encouraged by the headway that they have managed to make in such a hostile environment. Word of Life Mombasa is located in an area where there is a large population of Muslims who are not usually encouraging of Christian ministries opening up in their areas. Word of life reports that they have been able to bring the organization to a place where it is a household name and that even Muslim students attend their schools. They also encourage the work the Word of Life is doing in terms of rehabilitating drug addicts and former convicts because they prefer to have a safer community even though it means that Christians are doing it. They can also join their local sports teams without feeling that they are being indoctrinated, though Word of Life is still fully committed to being an evangelism and discipling organization. Lastly, Peter Odanga states that

Word of Life Kenya was the door to other Word of Life Ministries opening up on the continent of Africa and has so far set up other offices in West, South and Central Africa.

## **MISSION/VISION**

The mission and the vision are to reach youth with the Gospel. They have felt that their heartbeat is their mission statement, which is to evangelize and disciple youth through various means consistent with the Holy Scriptures. They strongly believe that it is the responsibility of every generation to reach its own generation and that they can change the world through the youth. They invest in young people and even though there have been shifts in the world, their aim is to take the unchanging word of God and to counteract the changing things in the world and young people's lives.

Word of Life as a whole has the vision to reach all the nations in the world with the word of God. The scope of the vision of Word of Life Kenya reaches outside of Kenya as they are the pioneers in Africa. So far they report having set up Word of Life Ministries in Nigeria, Ghana, Uganda, Mozambique, and Rwanda. They are trusting God for Tanzania to be complete in three years and also are looking to get into Southern Sudan. They are not going to be taking their young people to the US to study, but they will take them to Uganda, where they can talk about the culture in Africa because it is almost the same and then send them back as missionaries in Africa. They use various means to reach the youth including sport, prison ministries, Bible school in Nairobi and camps. Camps are their main focus because they believe many young people make decisions when they are in an environment like a camp. So they have their own campgrounds but also they go to schools and do campus camps and also satellite camps at subsidized costs for those who cannot afford the full price of traveling to their campsites. They have camps for kids in action, teens, colleges and career camps. They also work with young couples to give them guidance as they are just starting out their journey in marriage. They also have an academy that runs from kindergarten through grade eight, and they get to involve the community, including the heavy Islamic population. Because they are a youth ministry, they mainly focus on young people, specifically the teenagers, doing youth counseling and studying the culture to keep themselves updated.

Because they are located in Mombasa, they have no limit as to who they can work with ethnically or denominationally. There are more Muslims in the area than Christians, so Word of Life has broadened its scope to reach even Muslims with the Word of God. They have done this through sports ministries such as a football team and also by hiring them to work on the grounds. They reach other ethnic groups through satellite camps because some ethnic groups are more disenfranchised, and so Word of Life goes to these groups and holds camps for them to reach them. Their arena of action is youth evangelism and making sure that the youth are able to be leaders in their own right. While it appears that it is only youth who are served, Word of Life touches families through the youth that they transform. Parents are pleased that their children are changing, and also, the youth are the ones who can bring their whole family to church if they come from a family of non-believers.

Word of Life is not a church but a ministry that comes alongside churches to disciple youth. They are also not a relief organization but because of the political unrest in Kenya, particularly in

the coast, there has been a need for them to get involved. They became holistic regarding helping out with some ethnic clashes and floods that have been happening in the area to be relevant to the community. They trained their children in the schools to be involved by putting up clothing and also help out with the Red Cross. They have found the kid-to-kid ministry to be very powerful in terms of evangelism and showing God's love. Because they are a youth ministry, they try and limit the age of people that they work with and only use people 33 years or younger. They have found them to be relevant in reaching young people because youth have unique issues that need to be addressed by a person that they can relate to.

## **OTHER ORGANIZATIONS WITH SIMILAR FOCUS/MISSION**

They have worked with Child Evangelism Fellowship, which shares the same passion for bringing the gospel to children and also discipling young leaders. Child Evangelism Fellowship has its own camps and Bible clubs where they use their own material, but Word of Life has a ministry that is unique to the youth. Child Evangelism Fellowship is mainly geared towards younger children and has some programs for older children where they can teach, but their main mission is evangelizing to children. They also have worked with the Navigators and FOCUS, but these ministries are more geared towards adults while Word of Life is focused first and foremost on the youth (ages 18-33).

Plan International is another children's ministry, but theirs is a ministry that is more about relief and compassion towards children. Word of Life has just started a kid-to-kid ministry where children can donate clothing and shoes to other children who have been stricken by tragedies such as ethnic clashes and floods. However, Plan International is not a camping ministry, and so they need Word of Life to run their camps for them.

The Red Cross is another relief organization that cares for these children who have suffered such tragedies, but again they are not a camp organization. While there are some religious undertones in Red Cross, Word of Life is explicit about its stance on the Word of God and its mission in the world. Additionally, the Red Cross' work spans across all ages, and they do not specialize in their services. Word of Life is fully committed to working with youth and making sure that they are not forgotten in the evangelism and discipling of leaders.

## **CURRENT LEADER**

The current director is Peter Wabuti Odanga who works closely with his wife, Judy. They have two children: Phillip, 8 and Phanice 4. He has been the director since 2005. He comes from a background where his father was a believer, and his mother was a Muslim, but now both know the Lord. He came to profess Christ as his personal Savior in a camp after watching the Jesus movie. Before joining the ministry he was an automobile mechanic for three years and wanted to be an engineer. However, he could not afford to go to college, so he decided to volunteer part-time at Word of Life for eight years. During a mission trip to Uganda, he saw a great need because of the AIDS orphans he worked with and prayed for God to send laborers. God picked him as one of the laborers, and he got a scholarship to study. He went to Bible school at Word of Life New York and holds a bachelor's in pastoral studies. He is currently looking to get his

Master's in Kenya. His strengths, as he said, are that he is people-oriented and so has been able to influence a lot of positive change in his staff and family.

## **BOARD STRUCTURE AND COMPOSITION**

The makeup of the board is twofold. They have a board of directors, which is composed of 9 people and also the council, which is slightly larger than the board of directors. The board makes the main decisions, and it is required that the board is headed up by the country director because he/she is directly answerable to the headquarters. The deputy director is Harrison Ayero who is from Western Kenya and Thomas Obunde, who is in Uganda setting up the Bible school. They also have Pastor Murunga, retired from Good Shepherd Church from Nyanza province and Matthews Kalola from Eastern region of Kenya; both of whom hold doctorates. Then there is Patrick Karanja from Central Kenya, who is a business manager who might be transitioning out of the board because of some changes that need to be made and John Kiviutu who handles the finances and is also from the Eastern region of Kenya. One of their board members went to be with the Lord, and they are currently working on getting a replacement for him. The board is made up solely of men, but the council has a mixture of both genders.

The council has women in powerful positions such as Florence Jaoko, who helps with legal aspects and Nancy Kahenia, who is a media personality and is in charge of entertainment and advertisement. There is also Lois Olucho, who helps with the financial aspects. Only two members of the board hold confirmed doctorates, and the rest hold undergraduate degrees or Master's.

## **ORGANIZATIONAL STRUCTURE & LEADERSHIP**

They hire their staff regardless of their ethnicity or religion. Their office staff come from Word of Life Ministries, and these are all missionaries who have to raise their support. For the rest of the workmen who work on the Word of Life grounds such as the groundskeepers and watchmen, they hire these people from the local community. This means that most of them are actually Muslims, but because of the reputation that Word of Life has in the community, they are able to get involved in a Christian ministry.

Word of Life has a board and below it is the council. It raises its own CEOs through discipleship, so they do not have to headhunt for them. They invest training in their leaders and give them the opportunity to watch how the job is done. The current director had his predecessor walk with him, and now he is working with the two camp directors in Nairobi and Mombasa so that if anything should happen to him, there are people who can take up the job and do it well. He does not plan to stay at his post as long as his predecessors did because he believes that it is good to do a job within a certain time frame but also let other take over after that and allow them to serve in a better capacity. However, Word of Life has found it harder to provide formal training in addition to the discipleship that they are already doing well. The challenge has been in resources, but they are working on that as well as setting up a school in Uganda for African missionaries so that they do not have to travel to the US.

## **BOARD AND STAFF RECRUITMENT AND SELECTION**

In choosing the board, they pray then they bring the issue to the board depending on the area of need. They make sure that they have a list of qualifications that the person needs to have to get the job. Even though Word of Life is a Christian ministry and loving God is key, they value getting the right people, plugged into the right job. The board member must have proven professional qualifications in that area such as holding some formal knowledge of the nation's legal framework or fiscal responsibility. Then they consult widely within their rich heritage of alumni who have been through Word of Life. They also network with like-minded ministries and lead organizations in the area. They usually find someone who would want to be involved then they begin a formal procedure to wean out the candidates. They look for qualifications pertaining to the job description and allow the board to propose it to the council so that the council can look at the names. Then they do vetting regarding their spiritual background. They want to know the candidate's spiritual walk and their family. They consider board members to be like elders, so they want to know who the person is before they are brought in for an interview. The candidates do receive a formal letter informing them that they are being considered as a possible candidate and if they qualify they become part of the board.

## **STAKEHOLDERS**

The donors are stakeholders, and these are the people who help with camp fees such as scholarships and the support of the missions. Everyone who works at Word of Life is a missionary who has to raise his/her own support. So they develop a team that will help them financially but also stand with them in prayer. Other stakeholders are people they work with locally, for example, churches, individuals, and alumni. Some want to help with projects and others just want to know the state of the ministry and how things are running. They identify these people through their children attending camp, or some are just parents whose children go the schools. All their children are required to attend camp in December when they bring their children to camp. The parents then have an opportunity to connect with Word of Life and the ministry they are doing.

They respond to each stakeholder first through accountability, especially for those donors who give financially. The ministry writes reports back to its donors and communicates regularly to let them know where they are in different projects and how they are generally doing. For projects, Word of Life claims that they make sure that there is especially good accountability so that the donors can see where they started and the monitoring is done very well so that by the time the project is done, the donors can track the whole process. Every Christmas, they send a card or a thank you note to let them know that they are very grateful for the support. They believe that the more they communicate with the donors, the more trustworthy you become.

## **FINANCES & OTHER RESOURCES**

Being a faith-based ministry, there are many challenges unique to this type of organization, but they plan very well to maintain their focus. They have a strategic plan and a budget for the year, but sometimes it is not possible to realize the plan depending on what has come in or what they have received. Their main sources of income are through school fees and their cottages in

Nairobi and Mombasa. They use the income garnered to support the ministry, pay the staff, the bills, and if there is any money left over, it is used for other projects. However, because there has been unrest in the country, especially with the Mombasa Republican Council, their sources of income have been affected. This group's main initiative is to make the Coastal province of Kenya its own country, and it has led to a lot of clashes and attacks in the area and because of this, visitor numbers and camp attendance has dwindled for the fear of insecurity. Insecurity has affected income from tourists has dwindled in the region.

Mombasa Republican Council (MRC) is an anti-government organization that believes that Coast Province is not part of Kenya because the Sultan in Tanzania described it as part of the coastal line; therefore, it is supposed to be on its own. So MRC claims that the Coastal province is supposed to stand as its own country, and this has brought about a lot of unrest. There have been deaths involved in this political unrest and some of these deaths affected the church. Muslims densely populate Kwale County, where Word of Life Mombasa is located, and so they have been at the center of this unrest.

However, the ministry has a very good team of professionals working with it regarding monitoring finances and budgeting. They make sure that Word of Life not only has a budget but also is working within the budget. The books are available to the public if anyone would want to look at them. Before the current director came in, they had a backlog of auditing to do, but they have since cleared it. Currently, they are moving at a very slow and steady pace because of the little support that has been coming in, which has made financing projects a challenge. They say that they have very good plans in place but no money or resources to get them done, so they are trusting God to see them through.

## **PARTNERSHIPS/LINKS**

Word of Life is a ministry that has been called to think with a kingdom agenda in mind, meaning that they value partnering with other like-minded ministries in their work. They believe that there is no single organization that can accomplish the Great Commission on its own, and so partnering and networking with other ministries can fulfill this commission. They are geared towards networking with like-minded ministries such as Child Evangelism Fellowship, Navigators, and FOCUS. They have worked with Plan International for a number of years because they bring children to Word of Life for them to run a camp on behalf of Plan International. Plan International is not a camping organization but they have the resources, and so they can partner with Word of Life that has the training in running camps. They also network with a lot of churches because that is where most of the young people come from and also because they give back to the churches by attending their functions such as rallies. They network with local musicians because music is an industry that directly affects young people. Word of Life discipless these musicians to be more capable of leading their crowds and use their talent for the Kingdom. They also network with motivational speakers who would want to come and speak at their camps to motivate the youth.

Word of Life will not work with any group whose agenda is directly against the organization's mission statement. These would be organizations such as alcohol companies because that is not what the organization wants to encourage their youth to engage in. So even if the organization

wanted just to hire the premises and or sponsor a camp, Word of Life would decline because it would be an indirect endorsement. So companies that would want negatively to target youth, such as companies that produce drugs or alcohol or adult entertainment, are strictly forbidden from the premises. They know their limitations and prefer to stay in the situation that they are in than compromise the Word of God.

They will, however, work with Islamic groups because those are the members of the community around them, and so they need to be involved in their world to know what is going on in the community. Also, the youth that they work with may be facing opposition from the leaders and to stay relevant, they must be involved with them. Word of Life and the Islamic community suffers together when there are attacks from radical Islamic groups because businesses are affected as a whole in the area. Insecurity touches the entire community, so Word of Life Mombasa has to work with its neighboring Islamic communities to make sure that the area remains safe and secure. It benefits both parties because parents and business owners will put personal safety ahead of religious differences in such matters.

### **SWOT: STRENGTHS, WEAKNESSES, OPPORTUNITIES, AND THREATS**

The main strength of this organization would be because they are a youth ministry, they have a lot of ministry opportunity with the youth who form the bulk of Kenya's population. They will always be youth in desperate need for discipleship, and so they will always be relevant. Also, because they work with youth, they are always current and up to date with the issues that the youth are facing. This means that they are always relevant to the youth that they are trying to reach, and also they are always trying new approaches to reach the youth. They are aware of technological advances that can be used to reach effectively the youth i.e. social media and so they reach their youth in a manner that they understand. They also feel that they are strategically positioned to get a lot accomplished to the glory of God and they can go and open more doors in Africa. Because of their work, they have been invited to other nations on the continent to do the same work for God. They feel that they are giving something to the world that can outlast anything that the world has to offer. It is new, and it is very refreshing. They also are addressing issues that cannot be addressed by the church because of its conservativeness, and they have dedicated a team that meets and plans for them. Although they may not have the financial resources, they do have the manpower to go and do the work. They claim to have become a home brand in Kenya where people can testify to the impact that they have had in their lives.

The current director acknowledges that they have a lot of weaknesses mainly stemming from cultural biases in the set up of the organization. Their predecessors did not understand the culture very well and because of the manner that they set up Word of Life, it is very hard to break through the years of tradition and try and move things towards an African context. Most of the projects would have had more mileage if the founders had thought to bring in Africans to consult on it but they have to live with the way things are done now until change is accepted. Another weakness is the lack of resources for the ministry to spread as it would want to. There is a lot more that they can be doing, but they are limited because of funding. Additionally, funds are being taken up by the maintenance of the beach property because of the frequent wear and tear. Maintaining the property to a competitive standard is not possible without substantial sacrifices, and this is just another example of the cultural bias regarding sustainability because beach plots

are the hardest to maintain without a steady flow of income. Additionally, they have a very big number of workers who were hired and cannot be easily laid off.

Threats that they have been facing are many because of the political climate in the country. In the past few years, the government has not been very friendly to western missionaries and their agencies regarding fees and taxes. Missionaries who would like to continue working in the nation have had to pay hefty fees that affect their budgets and also pay taxes if they wish to stay in the country. So the missionaries who would typically be in Kenya are moving to Uganda and other places, taking their finances and resources with them. Additionally, there has been political unrest every five years corresponding to the election time, especially on the Coast because of the MRC, making everyone paranoid and affecting business in the area. A challenge that they have been facing is that they have not received the amount of training that they would like to have within their staff, but they are limited regarding resources. If the staff had more training, then the ministry would be running a lot smoother in terms of not having to have a lot of staff, because people are more equipped for the job. The main impediment to their mission, as with many organizations, is the lack of monies to complete all the projects that they want to do and also pay the staff. Also, there are past administration oversights that have occurred that are being rectified but at a very high cost to the budget. This means that the money that they may be garnering from their schools or cottages have to be used to complete the payments that have carried over from past management.

There are many unique opportunities that they have, especially because they are located in a predominantly Muslim area. They have a school that reaches the community, and it is open to Muslims who would like to attend. Word of Life is allowed to attend Muslim functions because of the impact that they are having in the community. The schools have turned out A plus students because they are trained in the way that they should go. They do quiet time in school, and they are taught the values of Word of Life, which in turn has brought in more money. They see it as an opportunity to work in such a hard place that is contrary to the gospel and witness first-hand what the Lord is doing. Because of the quality of education that is being given to their students, they cannot even cope with the number of children who are requesting enrollment in the Word of Life schools. In addition to the schools, Word of Life also has the opportunity to be intricately involved in the community. They are involved in community policing, development committee and district peace committee. They are now also involved with the Red Cross because of what they started with the kid-to-kid ministry. It has meant a lot to the community that they are involved, and they have taken on the responsibility of the church to be involved with its environment. The current director's prayer is that Word of Life will reach a place where it is sending missionaries to other parts of Africa and its surrounding nations and even the West.

## **IMPACT/SUCCESS/ASSESSMENT**

There is a young man by the name of Ahmed Said, who came to know the Lord through Word of Life ministries. The young man was a drug addict for ten years. He dropped out of school in grade 7 and by the time Word of Life reached him, it was a decade since he had been in school. After receiving the gospel and going to camp, he was encouraged to go back to school. He went back to grade 7 and finished his last two years of primary school and went on to do the national exam and became the top student at his school. Now he is in high school, in form 3 and his goal



is to finish school and to go back to work with Word of Life. Because of the impact the community saw in his life, they tell him that they would rather he remain a Christian than be anything else because of the radical change.

The school is also a project that they have been working on, and the way that it has been running has been described as a miracle. There is a big population of Islamic students, and they can walk with them even to high school and university. Word of life makes sure that they know how their alumni are doing and where they are. They usually come back every year, and they have found it very impressive that they want to stay on. Another project that they have taken on and has become impressive is their soccer team. The team is not set out to be for Christians, but rather to reach the locals, and it has done very well. It is in its fifth year and has qualified to be in the league. But their most important goal is to sit down and talk to the young people and show them the importance of them living right and embracing the Word of God. All the people that they have employed to maintain their grounds and also work in the night come from the soccer team. So far it has been very successful, and it is working for its own cause. If they have anything that they want to do, these are the people that they call on, and it has been working for them. It has put Word of Life in a very good place in the community and has improved their reputation because it means that they are active in the community. They have a project in the prisons where they have been allowed to go to any prison in Coast province. However, they have adopted Kwale prison because it is in the community and they want to impact the community. They involve the inmates in sports where they practice but also they are in the process of doing one-month leadership training for some inmates from the Word of God. They have been given permission to do the leadership training and they are in the process of planning for resources to get the training up and running. Apart from these long-term, on-going projects, they do short term complete projects such as setting up medical camps. They have networked with Nairobi Baptist Church to get medical experts, and they do free medical clinics with the inmates. When the inmates leave prison, for most of them, the first stop is finding out where Word of Life is to thank them and try and find a way to work with them. Their bigger projects have been setting up other Word of Life ministries in the continent. They started in Nigeria and have touched Southern and Central Africa too, all of which were done through the Kenyan office. They are trying to make sure that they have a national leader from the same culture and the existing churches.

## **TRAINING/LEADERSHIP DEVELOPMENT**

As an organization, they work on their part, especially the spiritual aspect and discipleship. They major a lot on people coming with qualifications, and they look at the documents that they present as evidence. Based on their proven qualifications, they are enlisted, but they feel that they could do more. From time to time, they hold short training where they invite experts to come and train them. They recently have had training on public relations, professionalism and the current policies on children. Because the staff works with children, they wanted them to be up to date with what is going on with the policies. They also seek out people who are doing outside training, and they send a few people to the training that come back and relay it back to the rest of the staff. If it were not for financial constraints, they would be sending their staff to get more formal education to do at least a degree or a diploma level so that they can advance and be updated in their training. For now, they want to focus on training on professionalism, which is important from the groundsman to the senior staff and also in finances and personal budgeting.

They would also want to do more marriage seminars to walk with people through all the changes that will occur in the marriage. Their main passion is in general leadership because they believe that everyone is a leader in their own capacity and if they can raise more leaders, it would make a big impact in the world.

## **PRINT AND ELECTRONIC MEDIA**

Media is key in their ministry because they are reaching the youth. It has caused them to move away from some of the things that they used to do in light of being relevant to you people. They have moved away from sending young people printed literature because they have found that they are more effective in tweeting or Facebooking them. They also have a website, along with their Facebook page and have garnered a very good following because the youth want to identify with some of the work that they are doing. They are trying as much as possible to be up to date with current trends to maintain and get the youth more involved, but they are still far away from their goal. They are currently trying to set up a network to find a property where guests and those involved in the ministry can access The Internet. They do not have access yet, but they are planning to have it so that what they have becomes more relevant as time goes on. Most of their distribution occurs on the Internet because of what the times require of them. They send newsletters via email; camp booking is also moving online, and they are in the process of getting an MPESA pay bill number that that it is easier to handle the money. They realize that they cannot compete with media, and so they are moving with technology to remain relevant.

## **FUTURE**

They have a strategic plan they keep improving every year; reviewing it to see what they have achieved and what they have not. They have short and long term goals ranging from one to two years and five years respectively. They look at five years as the longest time they can undertake for a project because it is realistic, according to them. Some of their future projects include getting fireproof roofing for their buildings in Mombasa. They have already structured the project and are now in the process of seeing how they will raise the funds. They are also in the process of building a swimming pool and adding some more cottages so that they can increase the resources that they have. When the founders set up Word of Life in Kenya, they did not have a master plan and so there was no such paperwork in place. Part of their planning now is to set up a master plan for the property for future sustainability. The director is working on getting his Master's degree as well as getting the two people he is discipling on the same track. His wife is already getting her Master's degree in project planning and management and his dream is that everyone who works there will advance at least a grade higher than they are at to improve the ministry and its long-term sustainability. They want to try as much as possible to reduce their dependence on the West because most of their current support comes from the US. Before this, it used to come from Germany, but their support has soon dropped drastically. Because of this, they have realized that support is not guaranteed, and so they want to be structured that their cottages are functioning at a level where they can cater to every need including paying the bills without having to borrow from anywhere and also take good care of the staff. They want to have a good size staff that will have the right people at the right place, meaning those who are adequately qualified for the job.

Regarding doctrine, they are in a good place because they have set up a culture of love and they keep making the main thing (the Word), the main thing. They believe that they are armed with sound doctrine and are on the road to fulfilling the Great Commission only trusting God that he will bless the ministry. Because the director's wife is in project planning, she has been very instrumental in helping them with their future planning. In the past, projects were started when all the funds were not in, and that has always been a danger. Under the new management, they have decided only to start projects when there are funds. This has made them go very slow, but at least, what they start, they can finish. This has put a damper on the new ideas that staff have because the excitement for a new idea is there but they cannot start a new project until the previous one is complete. However, this strategy has been very helpful in helping them stick with their strategic plan and has made a big difference.

What the current director has learned from Word of Life is that the cultural bias is not unique to only his ministry. The predecessors who came to Africa came with very good intentions and meant well, but many of them did not have a sustainability plan. Any good ministry needs a good plan for sustainability that includes training, how funds would be steadily raised, and leadership governance. This is where they are right now, and they are working hard on making a plan especially in the training part that is every important. Through proper training, the ministry can be taken from one generation to the next in a godly way. But some of the cultural mistakes that their predecessors made are keeping them from achieving their goals.

Some of these mistakes include the governance not paying land rates because they did not think it was important. So when Word of Life wanted to renew its lease, the new administration found out that they had a very big bill of 4.3 million Kenya Shillings (USD 50,588.00) that they had to pay before they got their lease renewal. This upset the budget because the money that was allocated for other projects now had to be put towards settling this debt. And the way that they had set up the ministry is that the boss (typically the missionary) gave handouts, and people did not have to work for their own. So when the new African administration came in and told them to depend on themselves, they experienced some pushback because people were not accustomed to working for themselves. Typically, Western missionaries set up the mentality where they came in and told the people what their needs were and solved them without actually consulting the locals. The director tells a story of a Dutch man who came to Africa to do a feasibility study and saw that the locals had no water. So he went and found a place to build a dam and got money from his friends and other donors. When the dam was complete, he brought them in from the Netherlands for the grand opening but could not get any locals to attend the event. He was very frustrated because he had done this project for them. No matter what he tried, he could not get even one local to attend. Finally, a pastor told him that there was one thing that he had done wrong. He had not involved the locals and so where the dam was built, was where they had buried their forefathers. Therefore, not one of them would even dare to drink because of their forefathers.

## **REPORT PREPARATION INFORMATION**

Peninah Kimiri and Prof. David Ngaruiya prepared this report. Peter Odanga was interviewed for this report by Prof. David Ngaruiya on August 6<sup>th</sup>, 2013