

BISHOP JOHN BOSCO

Report #K09

SURVEY

In our survey of 3964 Kenyans, more Kenyans listed Bishop Bosco as the most influential pastor, and more Kenyans listed him as the individual who had most impacted them, than any other. He was number one. A Kikuyu, in his mid-fifties, he was rated highly for training leaders (3.84 on a 4-point scale) and was reported to have an international impact.

ABSTRACT

Bishop John Bosco came up from living in the slums to leading the third largest Redeemed Gospel Church in Kenya. He had to endure some hardships during his early life such as learning how to fend and provide for himself but that prepared him for a hard and difficult journey of bringing the gospel to Mombasa. He has not only been able to penetrate the Muslim community in the coast area of Kenya but has been instrumental in reaching the unreached Digo community in his area. His school has also provided quality education at an 'affordable price' for the poor community and has been a bridge for the Muslim and Christian community to be able to live peacefully with each other. He is in the process of building his own leadership institute that will train Christian leaders to be more effective in their ministry.

BACKGROUND

Childhood Home

Bishop John Bosco was born in Thika in 1958 to two parents, but because his father could not pay a dowry for his wife, his maternal grandfather took him, his pregnant mother and his sibling away. In those days, a dowry was a serious issue, so the repercussions were expected. A single mother in Nairobi, in the Kibera slum, raised him. His mother had to sell illicit brews to feed her children until she met an already married man in the slums. They wedded, and she became his second wife, and Bishop Bosco says that his stepfather loved his mother because she was hardworking and very industrious.

When his mother became the second wife, they moved to the slums of Kariobangi, also in Nairobi. Bishop Bosco claims that he never knew his father as his mother hid that from her children. Even though he feels like he missed that opportunity, he respects his stepfather for taking in a wife who already had three children. However, when he was in the family, he says that he never experienced the kind of love that a father gives to his son because he was the black sheep of the family. So he had to go out and fend for himself because his mother's business of selling the local brews did not provide her enough to take care of the family. He bought his own clothes, but with a grateful attitude says that he feels that he was blessed enough to finish school to a tertiary level.

Countries of Residence

Bishop Bosco is not too keen on traveling because he feels that he has been called to serve the Digo people in Mombasa and other people in his vicinity. His church in Mombasa is his main

priority, so he tries to stay close to it. However, he has gone on the New Testament trip that tracks the Apostle Paul's journey from Greece, Turkey, and Italy and then to Israel. He also has gone to Malaysia for a month to take a short course. He mostly travels between Nairobi and Mombasa

Current Family

He met his wife in Korogocho, Nairobi, which is also a slum area, and they got married in 1983. They were born again together in 1985 as a result of his wife who wanted to leave because he had not been keeping his promises. The bishop suggested that they try Jesus, and so they did. They have grown in the ministry together, and she was ordained as an evangelist in 1998 in the Redeemed Gospel Church. She is also said to be one of the 3 ordained female reverends in Kenya. She helps the Bishop with the ministry and is also the co-director of the school that they founded: The Redeemed Gospel Academy.

The Bishop and his wife are grandparents and have two daughters who are married. Both daughters have been in ministry with them all along. One works in the capital of Nairobi with the Redeemed Gospel Church as a social worker. The other daughter lives with them and also works with them. The couple has also adopted two boys and a girl as part of their ministry.

Educational Background

He went to Kariobangi primary school when he was eight years old in 1966. Then he proceeded on to Nairobi Technical High School in 1974. He then attended Kiambu Institute of Technology where he studied construction. He loved construction, and even says that building is 'in his blood.' He has applied this training at his church as he is the one who designed the church building and in his words the building is a tourist attraction in Mombasa.

Bishop Bosco states that the majority of his training in ministry was on the job because he did not come from a background in the church. He has been a full-time pastor for 24 years and before that he served in other roles as a worship leader, evangelist, and a deacon. However, he has developed a burden for training leaders and even stated what he calls the "Redeemed Leadership Training Institute." Currently, he is building the four-story facility for it. However, he has also gone back and gotten some training. He has an advanced certificate in ministry from some training that he did at the Malaysia Institute of Leadership. He did a crash course from morning to midnight that covered 6-8 months of work in one month. He also has an honorary doctorate from a university in South Africa that learned what he was doing in Mombasa and wanted to support him.

Personal Testimony and Calling

He calls his placement in Mombasa "divine" because the Lord was filling up a need that was so great. When he went to Mombasa, he worked under Dr. Wilfred Lai who is also a Redeemed Gospel Church leader, and he says helped him identify the need to reach the Digo people. The church's mission statement is to reach the unreached people, and when he went down to the Coast in 1993, the Digo were part of the unreached. When he first came to the Lord in 1985, he assesses himself as growing spiritually very fast and within the first year he was a deacon and an evangelist in the church. However, the ministry could not support him and his family, so he always had small businesses on the side to help provide for his family. But in 1989, he found

out that the government was in need of technical teachers because they had converted all the technical high schools into institutes. He was qualified for the job, and his former headmaster found a posting for him in Mombasa. They agreed that he would go to Mombasa but after a year, he would be transferred to a school in the city. However, he found out that he could not be transferred until three years had passed.

When he was in Mombasa, he reports that he became zealous for God and would preach to the people in crusades, meetings and even on the street. In that era, the nation was under such strict regime that the law made very difficult to hold a public meeting. The president at that time wanted to quell the opposition, so one had to go up the ranks of administration starting from the local chief to get papers authorizing a meeting. In Mombasa, the administration was Muslim, and at that time, they were quite hostile to Christianity because they felt it was a threat to their faith, according to the bishop. So the Bishop would do some street preaching, and he says that the people stoned him. However, he says that because he had grown up in the slums, he was used to a hard life and was not deterred from preaching because of being stoned. He could not garner a gathering, and even the few Christians around thought he was mentally unstable to be exposing himself to such danger. One day, a lady told him that he was a very good preacher, but he should not be preaching in English because of the culture. When a person preached in English, it appeared to the people as though Christianity was a foreign religion to some of the people. So when he changed his language and also his message (to be a “little less radical”) people began to listen.

Additionally, he thinks that his placing in Mombasa as a teacher was divine because he helped raise the standard of education offered in his area. Kwale district, where his church and school are, is one of the poorest performing districts in the nation in terms of schools. He realized that most of his church members did not have their wives living with them. When he enquired, he found out that most of them lived upcountry because the schools are better there. The only other school that was available apart from the public ones was run by Word of Life, which was small and also was there during the colonial times, so there were some bitter undertones among the local people. So he began a nursery school in 1996, which was held in a semi-permanent structure. Slowly the Muslims around the area began bringing their children there because it was the only private school around and also, it was one of the best performing schools in the district. Now half the students are Muslims, and they are all doing Christian Religious Education in school. The threats of burning down the church have decreased substantially because the church supports the school, and Muslim children attend the school.

Influences

He says that his two male influences are his spiritual father, Bishop Arthur Kitonga of the Redeemed Gospel Church in Huruma, Nairobi, and Dr. Wilfred Lai. He says that he is hard for him to separate the two because Bishop Kitonga was the man who grew him when he was still in the slum and helped him overcome some of the mentalities. He also is the one who showed him that he had leadership qualities in him and helped him nurture those into something concrete. He also mentions Dr. Lai because he worked more years under him than under Bishop Gitonga. But Dr. Lai is the one who gave him opportunities to serve in greater capacities such as being the one to represent him when Dr. Lai was not available. He learned the ministry under Dr. Lai for more than two decades and says that he has had a very deep impact on his life. The greatest female

influence on him is Mrs. Kitonga, who is the wife to Bishop Kitonga. He states that he loves the manner in which the Bishop and his wife worked closely in ministry and even ministered together.

CURRENT MINISTRY OR VOCATION

Work/Ministry

He was consecrated as a bishop of the Redeemed Gospel Churches in Coast province in 2013. His region used to have around 200 churches, but they recently split the region into 3 to make it more manageable. Originally, the whole of Tanzania fell under his region, but now they have allowed them to have their own bishop. The remaining Kenyan churches on the coast were split into north and south regions, and he is the bishop for the south region. He governs approximately 90 churches and also sits on the regional board as the deputy secretary general. Before becoming a bishop, he was a regional overseer for 17 years, which was like an assistant bishop to Dr. Lai where he planted churches in Kwale County. Now they have 40 Redeemed Gospel Churches in Kwale, an area that used to have more mosques than churches.

Mission/Vision

His vision is to raise leaders who will serve Kenya, Africa, and the world. His mission right now is to encourage leaders, particularly pastors in ministry who are serving in hard and difficult places. He would classify Kwale County as a difficult area because it has many Muslims who are still hostile and resistant to the gospel and even have gone so far as to threaten physical harm on the Church. Each Sunday they have to have two armed policemen guarding the services in case of any attacks. His mission is also in line with the Redeemed Gospel Church's mission of reaching the unreached. The Digo people are part of the unreached, and they are even more unreached the further you go into the area. He says that he thanks, God because he has been able to see the 'success' of his hard work and that he has touched the people, and the church has impacted them. However, he still feels that there are more people there who need to hear the gospel.

Organization

He is a bishop in the Redeemed Gospel, so he is a leader in the church. He has a sub-regional overseer under him who oversees approximately 50 churches. Then there are area overseers who oversee 6-8 churches and under them a local pastor, for the sake of administration. He also works with the Digo community because his area is mostly made up of the Digo people.

Regarding funding and logistical support, the policy of the Redeemed Gospel Church is to give the individual churches semi-autonomy. The pastors are allowed to run their vision according to how they feel that God is calling them to and this is why the church is growing very fast. The pastors are given independence to do the ministry according to how God has led them, but they do have to adhere to some general constitutional policies such as qualifications for official clergy titles and the like. But the running of the church is up to the local pastor, and that is how Bishop Bosco was the first person in the Redeemed Gospel Church to begin a school. He claims that it was surprising even to his superiors because he had no sponsors backing the project. The way that he funds the school is through the church and making personal sacrifices. He has not been on any trips abroad except the New Testament trip and for training in Malaysia. He also has not

collected his salary for the past three years because of the great need in his church. The bishop says that one of his influences is the late Bishop Murima from Nairobi, who used to speak against 'over-dependence' on others to further the gospel in Africa. According to Bishop Bosco, Bishop Murima used to admonish people who went to Europe to seek money by using photographs of old women and children to raise money but come back and do nothing in the church with that money. So he took that on, that as much as possible, he would try to build something that is homegrown, through tithes, offerings, and gifts from the locals. He says that he is not against foreign partnerships, but the circumstances have just made it that he has had to be economical with what the church can give. He also has not done fundraisers because he has learned to manage the monies, and also his church members are very poor.

In building the church and the schools, he has not employed a contractor but has done the work himself. He states that he has no problem doing the work slowly as long as there is progress. The money that comes in the church has been converted into building materials, and the members are the ones paying for the structures. His congregation has people who make on average \$82- \$94 a month, with the 'wealthy' congregant earning \$235- \$352 per month. The area only has one industry, which is tourism, so the work is available in the high season starting in September to March of each year. So all the needs of the church are covered by its own members according to the ability that they have. Bishop Bosco is however not opposed to partnerships.

Impact/Success/Assessment

Training/Leadership Development

Personally, he has trained hundreds of leaders since he began his leadership training institute. He offers certificates, and he teaches on Mondays and Fridays. Currently, he is part of planning the Redeemed Theological Institute, which will be under the Redeemed Gospel Church's umbrella. They want to create a syllabus that will make the credits earned acceptable to any university outside their own. But for now, he is leading training mostly on leadership so that those who are serving in the church and even those outside the church can do it competently. He also trains pastors who are already in ministry and who have not received any formal training. They have set apart time as a church where they gather pastors and do a short training periodically to keep them relevant.

He advises younger leaders to be patient and not to be lured into the notion of instant success. To him, the gospel has been made very materialistic 'where God wants one to get rich quickly, drive a good car and have a big house.' But he cautions against that and also advises them to find a mentor, someone that they can serve under until they are refined. To him, there are very many young leaders who have rushed to begin their own ministry when they are still 'very raw' and it has created some problems with their theological teachings.

One of his spiritual sons is Apostle Musimi of 'Around the Globe' in Nairobi, who has a church, a radio station, and a TV slot as a platform to share the gospel message. Pastor Francis Osido Jr. is also another one of his spiritual sons who he has mentored and who he claims has had a 'great impact in the country.' But even with the 'success stories' of his mentees, he cautions against focusing too much on one part of evangelism such as a focus on deliverance. He acknowledges that there is a need for deliverance to identify the strongholds that are limiting the ministry. For

example, where he is, there is a strong need for deliverance from witchcraft which he sees as intertwined with Islam. There is also the prostitution and drug abuse that have come with the tourism. Because some of the young men have been delivered from that, they have gone overboard with it and put it as the main point of their theological stance, and they downplay other ingredients such as teaching, praying, fellowship and meeting the member's needs.

His church is in a transit town, and it is very hard to create and keep leaders in the church. He has a church of 3,000 congregants, but they usually stay for around 2-3, 'maybe' 4 years. With a low tourist season from April to August, many people are laid off from work. Being in a town, they cannot earn a living there without a job, so they relocate a lot. Sometimes he has found that after they relocate, he hears that someone has planted a church elsewhere. According to the bishop, those members who are permanent are those that God has blessed them, perhaps in their small business and have been able to build a house. The rest come in and out, and as they leave, new congregants come in to seek the same jobs that others have left.

Professional Relationships

None

Partnerships/Links

He does not have any partners who work with the church, as he has not sought for finances outside the church. He thinks that there is a general misconception when people visit his church that he is able to handle the issues with no need for financial support. So they have been building the church and the school by themselves, but he says God has not brought in any financial partners to the church. He is open to working with partners in this area as long as they do not come and take over control of the ministry. He wants people who will come and play their role in helping the church. For example, the church has no partners, but the school has some partners in that there are individual sponsors who pay fees for students. However, these sponsors are not sought after by the church, but rather, the students or their parents go out and get the sponsors. Bishop Bosco has no personal relationship with them, and he prefers to let the relationship remain between the parents and the sponsor.

He has however partnered up with individuals in the part of preaching and doing ministry. He allows for other preachers and pastors to come in and share the work with the congregants and in the schools and workshops. He is open to those who would like to help in this endeavor.

SWOT: Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities and Threats

Bishop Bosco states that his strength is prayer because it is virtually impossible to be a Christian in Mombasa without prayer. It is different from being in Nairobi because he has faced hostility and particularly in Kwale County where there has been witchcraft for him to contend with. Alongside prayer, he also says that he has consistency because he has been patient and zealous in doing the work of God without allowing himself to be discouraged by others because there have been many discouraging people along the way. He credits the grace of God for being able successfully to plant churches. Another strength that he identifies is his unique leadership coupled with humility that has been able to overcome the hostility and negative reactions against his ministry. Many times people have come to visit the church and they have not been able to

identify who the pastor is because he mixes in with the crowd. The same happens with the school because even as the director, he still is involved in the building aspect of the school. Most of this has to do with the fact that the weather in Mombasa allows for a more casual style of dressing than the Nairobi pastor would adorn. So despite his success in the area, he does not forget where he 'came from and that God is the only reason for his success.' His other strength is his heart for the people in the area. He enjoys raising people up from where they have come from and also helping them make something of themselves. Because he comes from a poor background, he likes to see people being raised out of poverty. He also is a mentor and has spiritual children serving not only in Kenya but in Tanzania, Zambia, and South Africa.

His weaknesses are that there is a lack of adequate financial support from within, and also the church has no financial partners. In a church of 3,000, people there are only 10-20 cars on any given Sunday parked at the church. The church is also the one that sponsors the school and sometimes they cannot pay salaries and run the school with the school fees that have been paid. Per every 3-month term, the fees are \$52 for the grade school and \$82 for the high school and an additional \$11 fee for exams because they have to pay for accredited exams from outside the school. They have teachers who are qualified to teach and help these children move on to the next level and also pass the national exam, but the community is a poor community. For some parents, the fees are equal to what they get each month, and they have more than one child in school. There is also a boarding facility for the high school section of the school, which is more expensive because of the meals and accommodation. That section only has 30 students because to the community it is very expensive. To overcome these weaknesses, he would like to have people come in and sponsor the meals to ease the burden for the parents. Another weakness that he is working on is paying the personnel. At one given time, he has 80 workers at the church who were needed but the money was not there, and he states that he even fell sick from the stress of not being able to pay them. Now he has reduced the number to around 60 but still the money is not there. Students come in knowing that they cannot pay the fees, and so they pay the registration fee but find themselves having to stay home because they cannot keep up with the payments. Bishop Bosco says that it would be his joy if all the needy students would get sponsors so that the school would run as it should and the children will have better facilities. He is personally invested in this endeavor and claims that he sponsors 30 children in the school so that they might, at least, have a chance in a better life.

His unique opportunities are that he has been positioned to reach the Digo people with the gospel and has even been able to recruit Digo pastors to do the work. The Digo are part of the Mijikenda ethnic group that is composed of nine distinct groups. Seven of the groups are found in the northern part of the Coast Province, and two are found in the South: the Digo and the Duruma. He feels that he has been blessed to be a part of bringing the gospel to the people in the Digo community. He also has had the opportunity to raise former Muslims to become pastors and evangelists in their own communities making the gospel more accessible to the interior people. According to him, this is a very significant opportunity because people in the interior parts of the coast have even poorer standards of living that even the water is too dirty for a person who is not indigenous to the area. So the fact that he can get Digo preachers in places such as Msambweni and Dima, who can be able to live in those areas is a very big accomplishment. He has preachers who would like to go to the interior area but according to him, it is not feasible for them first

because of the language barrier that they will face but also because the standard of living would compromise their bodies' immune system.

He also has had the unique opportunity to bring a good school to the area and be able to raise good students who reach their potential, which he thinks might have been stunted in the public school system. Through the children, he can now reach their parents and the elders who are resistant to change. The successful students that come out of the school give a good name to the church, which then creates interest among the Muslim community. Though they still have students who graduate and do not convert to Christianity, they can build a bridge between the Church and the Islamic community, so they do not feel like Christianity is encroaching on their territory with the sole reason of converting their children and having them turn against their elders.

The threats that he is facing have mostly to do with the surrounding community and their resistance to change. There has been great resistance in the slum areas, which used to be even violent but have quelled with the new laws on domestic terrorism. The church takes precautions for safety now. The church is not the only institution at risk because insecurity is common in the area, but they are especially vulnerable because of their location.

Reading and Writing

He reads a lot and even has a mini library in his office at the church. He reads books to learn and also to be able to deliver his sermons more articulately. He reads Doug Heward's books. Doug is a preacher from Ghana. He also reads books by Chris Oyedepo and John C. Maxwell. He also has materials from different colleges and schools of ministries that to help him with his ministry. He got a lot of material from the Malaysia Institute of Leadership and also some material from the Internet.

Currently, he is working on writing a book on the Bible and another on leadership. He has been writing small manuscripts for his lectures in leadership but has not been able to finish writing one book. He wants to write a book on his story from his childhood background up to his ministry. He also would like to option it as a movie so that it can encourage people to rise 'from nothing to something.'

Electronic Media

He has used all forms of media to get the gospel out as much as he could. He used to be on TV, but the church's finances could not allow him to continue. He thought he wanted to speak to a wider audience, but it was not feasible with the church's budget. He uses the Internet for his sermons and Facebook. He gets material off the Internet as supplements for his messages. He usually just uses social media to post comments to his members and keep in touch with his spiritual sons and daughters.

A Tanzanian missionary in Mozambique told him about his radio station in the bush and asked Bishop Bosco if he would be interested in doing the same. He was interested, and now he is planning on having a local radio station to reach all the people within his locality. He is currently in talks with someone from Brazil to ship the equipment for free, and he will be paying them back slowly.

Finances & Other Resources

He does not solicit funds from outside. Everything that the church has built has come from its members.

Political Arena

His view on politics is that anyone who votes is a politician. Because people determine who is in office, they cannot and should not separate themselves from politics in the name of being in the church according to the bishop. He believes that anyone who does so would be wrong because it puts the wrong leaders in power and people complaining have no one to blame but themselves if they chose not to participate. He believes that pastors should be able to direct their congregants when it comes to political matters, not in terms of endorsing a particular candidate but by teaching them how to select leaders according to their needs. He has found that many of his peers do not want to address politics in Kenya because it has become tribal. He says that politics is inclined to parties, and the parties have been made largely to cater for different ethnic groups. Pastors have to be very careful in how they speak about politics, or they will lose members because members are not all from the same ethnic group. But instead of being tactful, he has found that many pastors just choose to avoid the subject.

In his church, he allows politicians to come and attend services but not campaign during that time. He realizes that his church has around 3,000 members and politicians will want to come and address the church because of the availability of a crowd. But there are limits as to the content of their message during their address. To Bishop Bosco, the best thing he can do in politics is to give his members civic education on how to vote wisely. Despite the individual's party affiliation, there are people within each party that deserve to be chosen because they are the best in their field. So he tells his congregants to first and foremost, exercise their right to vote and then make sure that they are voting for the right person. Because he is on the Coast, the right person would be the one, to the best of the individual's knowledge, who will not fight Christianity and one that is God-fearing. Sometimes they are not aware exactly what the person's religious affiliation is because politicians will go to churches and say "Praise the Lord" but turn around and go to the mosque and say "A salaam Alaikum" and so on. So he also urges his members to pray that God helps Kenyans to select the right leaders.

He also acknowledges that pastors are not allowed to run for office if they have not officially resigned from their office. He has no problem with pastors who vie for a seat, so long as it is for the right reasons and not to get money or a bigger following. Church leaders are allowed to be in appointed or nominated offices as long as they did not actively campaign for them and his church has some people in such offices. His own bishop has been called to a government commission to sit in it and bring forth the issues that are surrounding the Christian church in Mombasa. He believes that this is good because the church will not be left out of key policy decisions, which will affect them whether or not they participate in the decision. Some of the church's overseers are also in seats at the county level. The bishop himself is on the County Bursary Board and sits on it with business people and a member who represents the Muslims. There he is articulating matters that concern Christianity in Mombasa, and he also gives the ideas and expresses what it is that Christians want and need concerning the matters that are being discussed. He also gets to discuss the church's role in the community and the running of affairs that perhaps there is a gap

or oversight on the part of the government. So he believes that the church should not shy away from matters of politics because it is relevant to its members and thus should be relevant to the church.

Future

Because Bishop Bosco feels that age is slowly catching up with him, he believes that the time to do anything will be now. He feels this not that God will not be able to use him when he is older but because he envisions the future to be a time where he will be passing on the baton to someone else and enjoying the fruits of his labor by taking on a less demanding role. In the next decade and a half, he will be 70 years old, and he wants that time to be dedicated to sitting down and writing. He will be having several books out, at least five of them are already in the works, and there are people in Nairobi who have volunteered to help him with them as time goes on.

He also has a vision to build a college that will be geared towards training leaders because there is no such college in that area. Currently, Christian leaders have to get their training through the Internet or have people come in and do short workshops for a few days, every few months. He wants a school that runs on a daily basis, even if only half a day, where the students come in the morning and in the evening they are working on research or homework to keep up with the training. As he is building the school, he also realizes that he will have demand for boarding facilities because the community around will not be welcoming to the students. While they have accepted the school, they are still not keen on having Christians living among them. Also, pastors will be coming from different areas and will need to sleep there because the commute will not be worth it. So they can be able to stay there for two weeks or a month and do crash programs to get their qualifications, but there will also be the full-time students. His courses on leadership will be relevant to all fields and not just geared towards Christianity so that they can also be able to help the surrounding communities. He previously has a computer college there, which also offered accounting, bookkeeping, and secretarial training but they had to close it down because the adults, particularly the male adults, did not mix well with the students. It also was very insecure because people could walk in and say that they were going to the school and because the tertiary level does not demand a uniform, it was hard to verify. But now he wants to restart these programs because he has positioned the college building in a place where there is no need for the adults to intermingle with the children. It is also in a place there the college students will be monitored and regulated to keep the children and the school safe. In addition to those courses, he also would like to have management and other hotel industry related courses that the locals might like to take to further themselves in the industry.

He also would like to drill for water in his churches that are in the interior area so that people will have to come to church for water. This would be an easy way for the pastors to reach people because it conveys genuine concern for the people in the area. When it comes to water, Bishop Bosco states that it does not matter what the religious affiliation is, that they will come and fetch water because it sustains life and also can help them earn a livelihood if they are farmers. The wells would just next to the churches, and it would be a way that his churches will impact those societies.

The greatest factor that is likely to hinder his success is the financial constraints that his church is facing. He has channeled his salary and all the finances that the church receives towards the

work because he feels that he is there for the work. They do not have any sponsors, and it is a very big church but with a very poor demographic. Most of the money goes into the maintenance of the facilities and running the church and the school. He says that he needs resources to write, get back on television and address other needs in the church, but the money goes faster than it comes in, mostly to paying salaries and maintenance fees.

In building the college, the money is needed for the land and the facilities that it calls for. Bishop Bosco has already bought a small piece of land to expand the college, but there is no money to raise the structures to build those facilities such as the hostels for college students. They do have the goodwill of the people who would like to see the church's vision succeed but the finances constrain the vision, making them progress slowly. So they are praying and trusting God for the money to build the facilities and drill for water but also are being economical with what God has already blessed them.

Question for Pastors Only [Quite a few people identified you as an influential pastor: If you were to make a guess as to what part of your ministry they were thinking of, what would it be? Preaching? Something else? Explain. Can you describe how often you preach, and a little bit about what you do to prepare your sermons?]

The Bishop cannot make a guess as to what people mentioned him for because he has been in ministry for over two decades and in that time he has been in different areas, and the focus of his messages has changed over the years. He used to be radical, and now he has toned down his message to be relevant to his community and appear less combative. He used to be heavily interested in deliverance and now he is into motivating and empowering his church members. Now he does a lot of outreach in the form of crusades but remains very much available to people. One does not need an appointment to see him, because if he is available, one will see him. And he sees this as God's grace that he can impact lives and still be involved with the needs of the people. He states that people know that is you come to him with a problem, and then he will try and do as much as he can to help you, whether you are born again or not. He says that his background in the crowded slums taught him good neighborliness and helping others out has really impacted him, so he has a heart to help everyone, even the Muslim community.

He is also involved in different pieces of training in the region. He preaches and teaches at different conferences which seek to empower attendees. He teaches at workshops for leaders and some in the evening for youth leaders. He has also been part of marriage workshops and held intercessory sessions in the day and revival meetings in the evening. He would not say that he is a very good preacher, but he credits God that he has been able to articulate his messages. He believes that his forte is teaching because that is where his background is.

His messages are mostly motivational because he tries to make people understand that they can stand up under their circumstances and overcome them. He also says that he seeks to strengthen and empower people to know that they can make it in life through hard work and persistence. To prepare for his messages, he does a lot of reading and refers to many books depending on the subject that he feels led to preach on. He does extensive research on his subjects and then conveys his message to his congregants in a manner that will be applicable to their circumstances. He acknowledges that he has come a long way from where he used to evangelize

on the street with a very direct and confrontational demeanor that the Muslim population would not want to listen to him. He says that he has now learned to package his message with the same content but in a better way with more relevant delivery to the listeners.

Report Preparation Information

Peninah Kimiri and David Ngaruiya prepared this report.

David Ngaruiya interviewed Bishop John Bosco

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