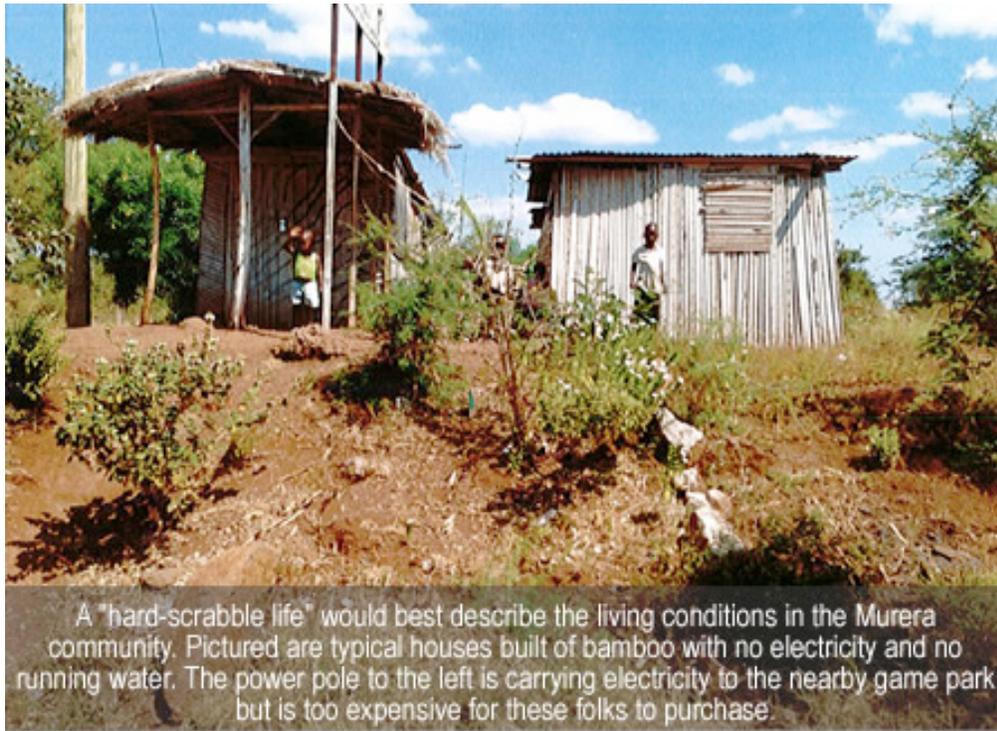


How Mt. Olivet United Methodist Church Connected with Kenya

In the mid 1970's, the Mount Olivet minister Rev. Lewis Gibbs applied for and was accepted to participate in the first pastoral exchange between a pastor in our conference and in a Third World country. Rev. Gibbs and his family went to Kenya to become the pastoral family to approximately sixty churches. Rev. Misheck Kanake, his wife Jennifer, and three-week old son Jonathan came to live in our parsonage and serve as our ministerial family. During the summer of 1977, Misheck preached sermons, visited in the hospital, and shared meals in our homes. He even got to sit on the stage at Lake Junaluska with Oral Roberts.

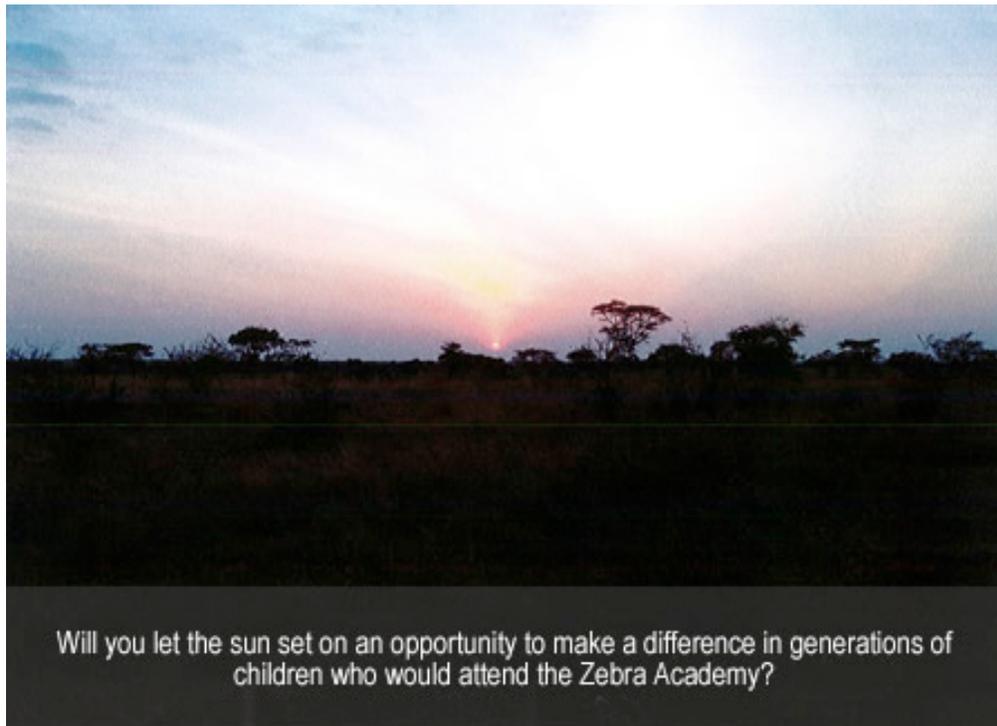
When the Kanake family returned to Kenya, little did we realize the impact Misheck had had on our congregation or the doors that were opened for him by participating in this exchange. A few people maintained contact with the Kanake family. We knew that he was elevated to the position of bishop of his synod and that he had attended training in Japan. But, over the years, the contacts became fewer.



A visit in 1989 changed all of that! Misheck stopped here on his way home from an international conference. That night, he shared that one of his biggest disappointments was that no one from Mount Olivet had been to his home. And that lit a fire in some folks...

The ripples of Misheck's story continue to reach out. Several years ago, Dwight McBride set up a website for the church. He included information about the Kenya mission trips. A man from one of the largest churches in the WNCC was looking for a place to spend some of his church's mission money. He did a web search and what popped up—our Kenya mission connection. He and his wife were at our church on the Sunday we returned from our 2004 trip. They witnessed

the depth of feeling that each speaker had for this project. Wesley Memorial UMC has now sent four teams to Kenya—not just to ARI School but other parts of the country also. They have made improvements to churches, schools, and medical clinics. They have touched the lives of over 15,000 Kenyans. In January 2007, they sent a medical team to one of these clinics. They treated 1,500 people in one week! Other churches in the High Point-Greensboro area have become involved and continue to send teams to Kenya.



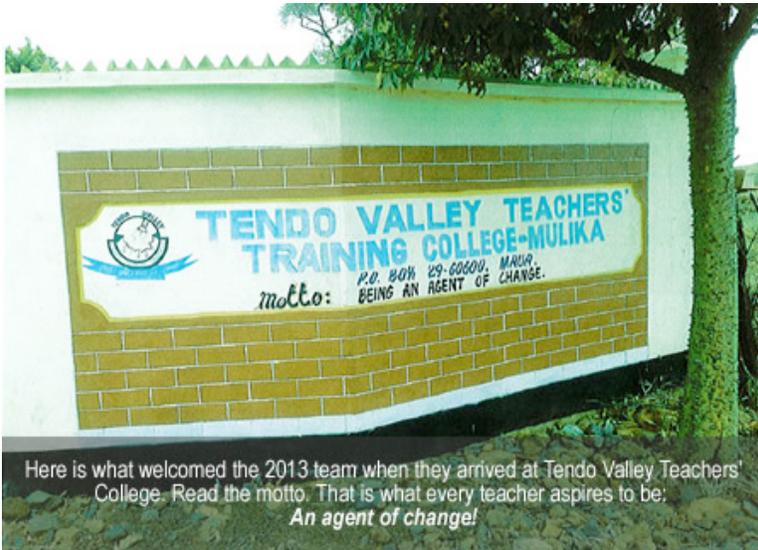
2016 Expedition

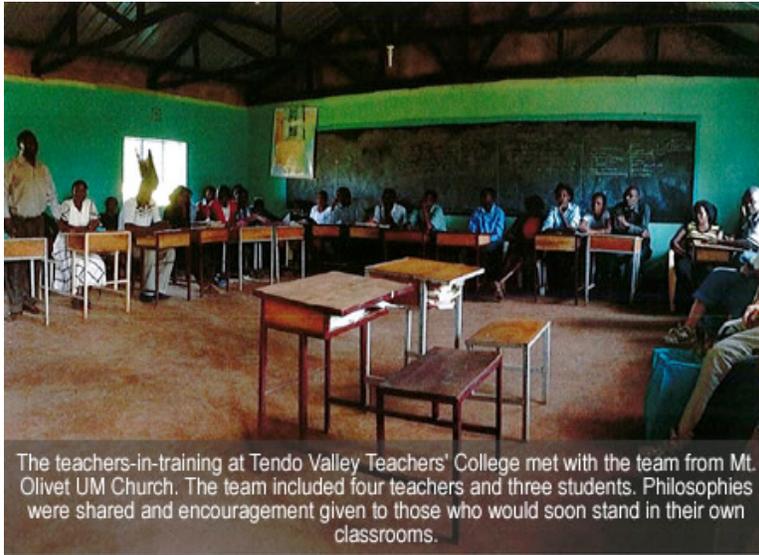
In 2016, nine people traveled to Tendo Valley Teachers College to build a dining hall and kitchen facility. Before this construction, meals for the college students were prepared outside over an open fire. The block construction required a great deal of concrete mixing that was done on the ground. The women on the team enjoyed going to the nail salon each day! No manicures... nails were being straightened for use on another project. We came to appreciate the Kenyan's sense of wasting nothing and recycling everything. We were also honored to take part in the dedication of the building we worked on in 2013. We visited the ARI School and the Zebra Academy where friendships were renewed.

2013 Kenya Mission Trip

In 2013, a team of twelve traveled to Kenya to work at a new location. Six of the previous seven trips were centered at the ARI School. This year, the team worked at Tendo Valley Teachers College. Rev. Misheck Kanake had established this college in response to a need for teachers in the district. The college is located several miles down the road from the ARI

School and was established in 2011. To receive accreditation, the college needed a library. The 2013 team constructed a stone building that will house a library and a teacher workroom. During one of our work days, we were asked to meet with the second-year college students. There were four teachers or retired teachers on our team. These folks shared classroom experiences and offered words of encouragement to the teachers in training. After we returned home, we received an email informing us that each of the graduating students had passed the national teachers' examination.





2010 Kenya Mission Trip

The Kenya Team...Rick and Delinda Rodgers, Scott Rodgers, Justin Rodgers, Ryan Ingram, Spencer Phillips

How much work can five adults and a ten-year-old accomplish in a week? Physically, we did a little painting, cleaning up construction debris, and sanding walls but spiritually we did more than will ever be measured! This year's Kenya Team was the smallest that has ever made the trip. In terms of what we saw and the lives that touched us, only God will be able to measure that work. ARI School is prospering in terms of children being educated scholastically, spiritually, and ecologically. They continue to score near the top in the national exams that are administered to the eighth graders. They are strong in their belief in God and their love for Him. ARI School is teaching all of them to be self-sufficient. Each child is growing trees to plant and some of them help in the garden or work with the animals.

To see students who were orphans or who had been abandoned by their parents live each day with a joy and love made us realize that the Kanakes have certainly answered God's call to serve Him. But outside the walls of ARI, Misheck is working to develop churches and schools that will serve localities that have never seen either. We attended churches that on Monday through Friday serve as schoolrooms. These buildings would have been condemned in the U.S., but those folks were just happy to have a place to worship God.

Previous Expeditions:

2007 Expedition

Seventeen individuals traveled to Kenya in late June, 2007 to see old friends and meet new Kenya individuals plus work on another building construction. The enrollment of ASRI had grown. An additional three-room classroom was near completion when the team went home.

2004 Expedition

The 2004 Kenya team was comprised of ten members. This team had more women than men for the first time. It was the second time that three generations from the same family were represented with a grandfather, grandmother, son, and six-year old grandson being part of the group.

The team renovated a dining hall and kitchen facility at ARI School and began construction of a science building.

2003 Expedition Continued Support

The 2003 expedition had to be cancelled at the last moment due to terrorist threats in Kenya resulting in the decision by the commercial airlines to discontinue flying into Kenya.

2000 Expedition

The fourth expedition to Kenya to aid in mission and agricultural work was completed very satisfactory. Major accomplishments included completing a girl's dorm, people to people contact and understanding, and providing funds that enabled the ARI school to obtain electricity for the first time.

1997 Expedition

The ten members of the 1997 Expedition laid the stone foundation, built walls, and constructed trusses for a chapel and library on the campus of the African Rural Institute.

1994 Expedition

The eleven members of the second expedition constructed a three-room dormitory at the African Rural Institute (ARI).

1991 Expedition

The first trip included sixteen members and constructed a kitchen and dining hall building at a church conference site.