

MARCH NEWSLETTER 2019

‘BUILDING BRIDGES, NOT WALLS’



Building bridges requires truth, peace, mercy and justice!

A story is told of two brothers who lived opposite each other. Brother John got into a serious disagreement with brother Mark. The disagreement was so bad that John decided to put up a wall between the two homes, so that he could see less of Mark.

When John got an invitation to travel abroad, he sourced for a good architect to build a wall for him so that when he is back, he will not have to see his brother again. The architect sought to understand the whole context of the disagreement that brought about this decision, that two brothers would want to be separated by a wall. When John left, the experienced architect started on his assignment and with diligence, he finished the task well and on time.

Brother John finally returned from his trip abroad! To his amazement found a beautiful bridge had been built. As he was assessing the construction, his brother Mark saw him and came running, knelt down in tears and asked for forgiveness. John in tears too, bent down, took his brothers' hands and lifted him up and hugged him.

When John inquired from the architect why a bridge had been built and yet he paid for a wall; the architect replied and said: *'I have been in this construction business for many years, but I could not be the one to separate brothers.* This is a great example of what our society needs: forgiveness and reconciliation.

Dear readers, what do we learn from this story? How many walls or bridges have you built so far? I call upon each one to be active in building bridges and not walls and seek to uplift each other.

In the month of March, PHARP's activities were those focused on building bridges through strengthening relationships and creating opportunities for growth and promoting co-existence.

On March 12th: PHARP was visited by the director of VOHFA-USA. The meeting focused on how best to strengthen the existing partnership between the two organizations. VOHFA which focuses on education, health, women empowerment and development is very keen to offer its skills and expertise. From the time PHARP has been in existence since 1994, the primary focus has been on the transformation of individuals and communities. This was an opportune moment to jointly work together to foster peace, healing and reconciliation through education, empowerment and equipping church and community leaders (men, women and youth) in various communities.



Left: Director of VOHFA getting to understand more a discipleship manual used in training. Right: Director show casing a support stick done and decorated by women through women empowerment program.

On March 18th to 20th: PHARP was delighted to graduate 32 pastors, lay leaders and teachers who had committed one year of training in different aspects of discipleship. Other than discipleship, these participants also had courses on spiritual leadership, peace and conflict, trauma healing and reconciliation. These are vital skills that are needed at home, work and ministry.

In order to fully equip and commission these graduates, they each received supportive materials: discipleship manual – *'Finding your place in the world'*, Trauma healing work book, Conflict Transformation manual and lastly, through the support and partnership of BIBLICA, each graduate received a JUSTICE BIBLE, NIV version.

In the spirit of co-existence, a Muslim leader (Sheikh) who was present at the graduation invited by a relative strongly applauded the program and encouraged the participants to be aware that stable peace requires participation of each one, regardless of tribe, religion and party affiliations.



Sheikh Muhamad addressing and encouraging participants on the need for co-existence.

During the graduation, there were overwhelming testimonies from participants, however we shall highlight a few.

I am madam Loise. I am happy today to be graduating with my fellow course mates. It has been a year of great transformation for me; friendships were created and my faith greatly spurred to dig deeper into the word of God. As a leader, change needs to start with me. Am delighted that my husband and children are here to witness and attest for themselves.

I have been a Christian for more than 30 years now, but when I look at my Christian life for all that time, I realized that I have hardly grown. It's like I have just been doing a routine thing. Through this discipleship course, I was challenged to make disciples of Christ. Yes, I have nurtured my children, am a deacon and a women's leader, but have I been deliberate and intentional in teaching them the word of God? When other women I serve (young and old) look at me, would they say am a follower of Christ?

All along I knew that preaching and teaching the word of God is the pastor's work and that is why they are paid by the church. Throughout the course, I learnt that every Christian who says they are saved, preaches to others by how they live out their salvation.

Therefore, I need to live right and be intentional in teaching others the word of God.

Every day as am given life by God, I need to reach out to at least a person with the love of God.



Left: Loise, testifying of how discipleship has changed her life. Right: Receiving her certificate

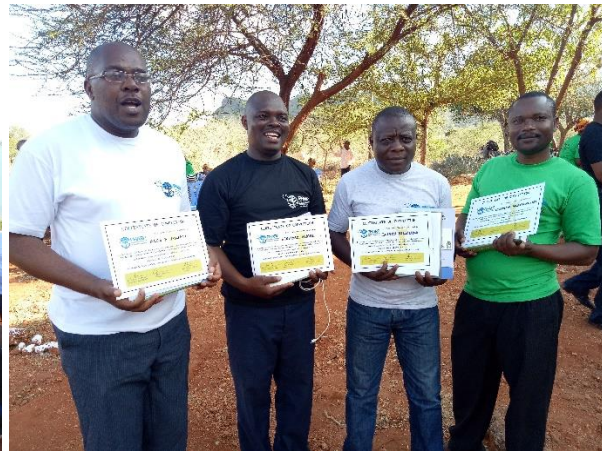
I am pastor Gumba. I am delighted to be graduating today with my wife. When this course came to us from PHARP, I told my wife we should enroll. I don't know where I got the strength to enroll, but I knew that something good is about to happen. One of our pastors had attended a previous course and he encouraged me to attend as he knew the struggles I was facing in ministry. And I do not regret.

The topics we covered really helped me and rejuvenated me again for the ministry. Before enrolling for the course, I was deliberating with my wife that I should take a break from ministry and maybe do something else because I was getting really discouraged by the day. But when we learnt on the need for discipleship, therein was a topic on symptoms and signs of dying churches and the reasons for dying churches, then I fully understood my attitude of wanting to take a break from the ministry.

I stand here before you more charged than ever to preach and teach God's word. Together with my wife who is my helpmate and witness, we shall work hard towards achieving the goal of discipleship which is to bring people to be saved holistically, to be reconciled with him, with our fellow men, with self and with nature. Therefore, am much grateful to God, PHARP and, tSOAR-USA who made it possible for me to be empowered and equipped.



Top left: Pastor Gumba testifying. Pastor and his wife (white t-shirt). Below left: Pastor receives his certificate. Right. Pastor wife receives her certificate too.



The class of 2019- Mbololo Location- Voi Subcounty- Taita-Taveta County.

MALINDI PHARP MONTHLY ACTIVITIES

Discipleship through School Ministry

The field officer visited two new schools with a purpose of introducing these high school students to embrace discipleship and most importantly, to create time for God's word daily.



PHARP field officer (stripped shirt) facilitating a discipleship outreach

RWANDA DISCIPLESHIP

A one-day seminar on discipleship was held at PHARP's office in Kigali on Wednesday 27, 2019. The aim of the meeting was to share Joe Williamson's vision of discipleship and of Jesus' Great Commission. Pastor Anastase Rugirangonga (PHARP Rwanda Director) facilitated the meeting using materials from the workbook '*Finding your place in the world*'. Using the acronym tSOAR (time, truth, trust, surrender, obey, Abide and reconcile), the participants were helped to understand the basic discipleship concepts or the ongoing relationship with Jesus. They liked very much the vision and the materials. The participants were amazed by learning that all that Jesus taught and is requiring us to know, live, and teach is found in Matthew 5,6,7; something they said they had not given attention to before as they thought that all the four gospels are full of Jesus' teaching. They dedicated themselves to studying Jesus' teaching with other people into small groups for their personal growing relationship with Jesus but also for reaching out to others for Him. They gave themselves a period of three months to meet again and report on their experiences.

The participants were from different churches including- Anglican Church, Presbyterian Church, Pentecostal Church, Evangelical Christian Church, United Churches of God in Christ, and Free Methodist Church; they came from the four provinces (South, North, East and West, and the City of Kigali).



Left: Participants in group discussion. Right: trained participants (Pastor Anastase in brown jacket)

PRAISES AND PRAYER REQUESTS

1. We thank God for a successful month of March and the activities undertaken.
2. We thank God for peace and good-will that the country continues to experience.
3. We pray for those suffering of hunger in Turkana, Pokot, Baringo and Kilifi Counties.
4. Pray for an organized peace tournament that is scheduled for April 2019 to be conducted by like-minded organizations and churches in Malindi.
5. Pray for the country of Malawi and Mozambique that are facing serious effects of cyclone Idai. The floods have caused much havoc and destruction. In particular pray for the PHARP Malawi contact person, Pastor Nchito whose house was washed away by the floods.
6. Pray for a similar training in Mwatate- Tatita Taveta County. One of the graduates has a fellowship with 60 pastors who also requested similar trainings. Pray that God will provide the resources and strengthen the facilitators as the area is remote and harsh weather conditions.