

The Economics of East Africa

It seems like the woes of the American economy are on the minds of many these days, and rightly so – our nation’s economy does seem to be in some trouble. However, in the midst of us worrying about rising gas prices, inflation, foreclosures, and bank failures, sometimes it is good to keep things in perspective. Consider the following:

The average daily wage in Tanzania is 4 U.S. dollars. That means the average worker makes around \$1000 per year.

Tanzanian people have no access to credit. If they have no cash, they cannot buy anything.

Medical insurance is non-existent, therefore, prayers are a first resort, and doctor visits are a last resort... even when one has a sick child.

Unemployment (defined as the absence of steady work in one location) in larger Tanzanian cities is in the neighborhood of 50-60%.

There is no “welfare” system for the injured, disabled or unemployed.

Adequate education for children is costly. Schools that actually do a decent job in educating children are private, and charge anywhere from 50 U.S. dollars to 200 U.S. dollars per child each month for tuition, uniforms, books, and supplies.

Most Tanzanians do not own automobiles, but they do ride buses that increase their fares as fuel costs increase. Currently, gasoline is around \$5.50 a gallon and diesel is close to \$6.50 a gallon.

In cities, the vast majority of people rent their homes. A single room with sporadic electricity in an “apartment” complex (no running water, community bathroom) will house an entire family for about \$40-\$50 a month.

“Has God not chosen the poor of this world to be rich in faith and heirs of the kingdom which He promised to those that love Him?” (James 2:5)

“*You might miss a fortune, but it might not be your misfortune.*” – George Bailey, Gospel preacher

John Baker-Missionary to Tanzania

Slow going at the speed of light.

Our blessed Lord said: “let your light shine before men” (Matt. 5:16). Let’s examine briefly some particulars about this word “shine.” First, it is a verb, which we know to be an *action* word. We must be active in doing the will of our Master, and not merely claiming allegiance to Him. Secondly, in the original, it is also in the *imperative* mood. Letting our light shine (living a godly life) is commanded. Oh how we need more saints to be more sanctified! Thirdly, the word is in the *aorist* tense. Rather than giving attention to past, present, or future action, as in our English, here the action is viewed as an event. Once we become “children of light” (Eph. 5:8), our shining example should be our manner of living - our singular mode of life. Lastly, we note the word is *singular* in number. Jesus was stressing this to be the responsibility of each individual. Some desire to receive praise by simply holding membership with a congregation known for good works, while they themselves contribute but little. We each must be shining by our good works.

The light from each faithful Christian is impacting the world. But this influence is gradual in its working. As neighbors, friends, and coworkers see our lives, they may build a respect for our integrity. With each deed, we show Christianity. Deed by deed the leaven of Christianity is working. The Christian’s light of life does not blast people out of troubled waters. Rather, we are like beacon’s on the shore – showing the way to still waters.

You see! We are going slowly, at the speed of light! Let your light shine, and those lost in sin will “see your good works, and glorify your Father who is in heaven” (Matt. 5:16).

George Jensen Missionary
Tanzania East Africa 2008

What do I miss, you ask?

What do I miss you ask? Well let me see.

I miss sitting on the porch and being able to see as far as I can see without the hindrance of an 8 foot concrete wall.

I miss street lights, sidewalks, drivers who obey the traffic laws, and policemen.

I miss being able to leave the house, get in the car to go wherever, and NOT have to stop at an 8 foot metal gate, with padlocks, to let me OUT, and then stop on my way home to reverse the process to get IN.

I miss constant hot water from the faucet.

I miss crushed ice, and ice machines. Having to fill ice trays takes me back to the years of filling those metal trays with the lever release to get the ice cubes out that NEVER worked!

I miss water PRESSURE!!!! We have trickles with pressure only as high as the tank outside allows.

I miss cold sweet milk, sour cream, cream cheese, and blue cheese dressing.

I miss constant electricity, window screens, and doors that seal out the bugs.

I miss central heat and air. I am currently sleeping in sweats, socks, and UNDER a down comforter. Yes, Africa DOES get cold! We don't need the air, but the heat would be nice.

I miss Ol'Roy dog food. We have to cook the dog food - the dry food is nearly \$30 for a 20 pound bag and with Kali and Earl it wouldn't last a week.

I miss Home Depot, Wal-Mart, Lowe's and one-stop shopping.

I miss paved roads. You can release kidney stones on the roads we travel each day!

I miss talking to my mom and sisters on my way to work each morning. Unlimited IN calling!

But what we miss the most is our family, friends, and those relationships that we have made over the years from work, church, and neighbors. That is one reason we are always saying we love to hear from you. Just this week I was reconnected with a college girlfriend via this blog that I literally have not heard from since college. That is a long time ago, I'll not tell you just how long!

But as many things as we miss from home, there are things here that I would miss if I were back in the States.

I would miss the unbelievable fresh fruits, vegetables, and the spiced local foods. I LOVE this food, and it is obvious as I have NOT wasted away to nothing while here.

I would miss driving the roads only to have to stop to let elephants or zebras or giraffes cross! The wildlife is just unprecedented!

I would miss the simpleness of life. I never realized how much I enjoy a simpler home, a quieter life, and fewer gadgets. Unless I just have to, I will never own another electric can opener- it takes up too much counter space! We get too caught up in things, places to go, and things to watch, that we forget what quiet sounds like. No one rushes here ... NO ONE!

Even though I miss constant electricity, I would miss those nights we read by candlelight or headlight, or just sitting waiting for the electricity to come back on. There is such a calmness about sitting in the dark with candles lit.

I would miss the climate. Even though at night right now we are cold, there is literally NO humidity here. Being from middle Tennessee, that is a BIG deal. 90% of the time the weather here is perfect.

I would miss worship services. We have so many conveniences at home that services sometimes become an extension of our homes in comfort and familiarity. Here, we worship in buildings with no walls, dirt floors, no padded pews. We have Bible class sitting on the grass, next to the cow pen, under trees, or in scantily furnished mud floor homes. I have never enjoyed Bible classes more in my life!

I would miss the poverty. I know that sounds weird, but I have never been so aware of my blessings as I am here. The poverty here keeps me in check with what blessings I have been given.

And I guess one of the biggest things I would miss, is knowing that I have more influence for good here than I ever had in the States. I am sure that is my fault. I did not take the opportunities presented to me or maybe it is because here we can focus on that aspect of work. Whatever the reason, I feel incredibly privileged and blessed to be here.

"The grass is always greener" we have been told ... the challenge is to fertilize your own grass so you don't have to cross the fence!

Our love to you all,
Shasta and Anthony Brown

Don't Forget To Finish

Life is full of opportunities to do good and to do evil. We have free choice as to which road we will travel. We can choose our goal, choose our companions, choose our occupation, choose our method of travel, choose our preparation, but first we must start, or all our planning means nothing. Our plans simply become good intentions. How much good has not been done because we never got past our intentions? What souls have been lost because we never launched out and spoke to someone who needed to hear the truth? What loss have we suffered because we never started?

Is there anything as sad as "What might have been?" Oh, how true that is, spiritually speaking. "Almost persuaded" but not quite. It is a proverb with examples of people who let time and circumstance pass by, yet never act, never start, never step up.

In commerce, in governing, in every aspect of life we must first start before we can finish. It is no different in the Christian walk, first starting, then enduring then finishing.

In your congregation, in your mission work, in your daily walk... have you started?

"Someday" is not starting; someday is just a definite "maybe", a promise unfulfilled, an excuse. When I was a young man I apprenticed with a well known farrier in North Texas. He taught me many things but the most important thing he taught me was this: He told me never to "select or cull" difficult horses, that it was best to shoe them as they came. That is, don't

put the tough ones off till later, but work on them first. If you don't do that, he told me, there would come a day when you wouldn't want to work on the tough ones and soon to follow would be a lack of desire to work on any of them. Good advice. Start but don't forget to finish.

We need to be working to start with the hard things of life, not just thinking about or planning to do them. You know I can never remember a time working with him that he ever "picked" a horse. He always told the owners to "bring us the next one you want worked on." I think lots of times the Lord simply "brings us the next one he wants us to work on," the doing of the work He leaves to us. First we have to start, then His word will finish. just ken

Good Guys Need Letters

Anthony Brown, P.O. Box 12381, Arusha, Tanzania
John Baker, P.O. Box 12381, Arusha, Tanzania
Jimmy Gee, P.O. Box 10622, Arusha, Tanzania
Sean Hochdorf, P.O. Box 12381, Arusha, Tanzania
George Jensen, P.O. Box 1923 Moshi, Tanzania
Christopher Mwakabanje, P.O. Box 7493, Moshi, Tanzania
Paul Ndwani, P.O. Box 1076 Arusha, Tanzania
Fariji Paul, P.O. Box 376, Usa River, Tanzania
Brent Richardson, P.O. Box 1727, Arusha, Tanzania
Carey Samford, P. O. Box 12381, Arusha, Tanzania
Cy Stafford, P.O. Box 12381, Arusha, Tanzania

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MISSIONS

Ken Upchurch



Mission Team

John Baker Family
Anthony Brown Family
Jimmy Gee Family
George Jensen Family
Brent Richardson Family
Christopher Mwakabanje
Carey Samford Family
Sean Hochdorf Family

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Prayer

Some have heard me say; “be careful what you pray for, God will give it to you.” Shortly after becoming a Christian (Nov. 23, 1980) I began praying God would use me on a full-time basis in His service. I believe God answered that prayer some ten years later.

One evening after a Gospel meeting in Hattiesburg, Mississippi my wife Stephanie was talking with the preacher’s wife (Claudine Connally) about our desire to do mission work, perhaps sometime after our three sons grew up and were on their own. This conversation took place in October 1990.

To make a long story short, in July 1991 we found ourselves in Africa- Chimala, Tanzania to be more precise. We arrived very naive and inexperienced. We had some very difficult first few weeks, but we stayed the course and the Lord has blessed us beyond measure.

Prayer is a tool the Lord has given each of His Saints that we might have a venue to meet with our God day by day. It is God Who gives all blessings. It is God Who sustains this world. It is God Who will judge the life we live while on this earth. It is God Who has made it possible for us to know Him and to live for Him. It is God Who gives us the strength to carry on and to be all we can be.

Prayer, offered in faith, can accomplish all that needs to be accomplished in our lives. When we are weak, God gives us strength through prayer. When we are lost, it is God Who shows us the way through answered prayers. When we are blessed, it is God Who shows us the way that we might be the giver He would

have us to be that others might know Him, through answered prayers.

Prayer is a privilege often neglected in the life of too many Christians. God desires that all men be saved and come to a knowledge of truth (1 Timothy 2:4). Prayers offered to God with this in mind can save the world.

We would like to invite you to put on your daily prayer list the lost of the world. Pray that God will open doors of opportunity that we might recognize them and that we might act on them.

It is a sad fact that we live in a very materialistic world. One of self-indulgence where the only concern is for me, myself and mine! This is the opposite of what our God would have the world to be. We need to desperately pray that God will take away all this from His children. That He would give us hearts of repentance, holiness, and sacrificial lives.

We serve and pray to a God Who is able, willing and joyful to give all good gifts. Let us not neglect such a wonderful gift as Prayer. Let us pray that God will use us in His service in a mighty way. Let us pray that God will, through His word, show us the way that will lead many to His Church.

We pray for you, our friends and supporters daily. We ask that you pray for God’s work here in Tanzania & where you serve. Thank you all!

In His Service, Cy