

Training African Missionaries 2024

Introduction

The KingdomIT project for the ICCM Africa conference, where African missionaries are being trained, took place in Kenya this year. Ruben Felix will tell you all about the conference in this travel report, and we will close it with a piece from Sjoerd Kuipers, who gave a leadership workshop for pastors.

Events before and during the conference

It is always interesting what happens before and during the conference. Missionary work doesn't happen without a spiritual battle, but also not without God's presence. During this trip, we had to deal with extreme rain and floods, to the extent that we feared participants would not be able to come due to problems en route to the conference (see the picture to the right to get an idea of the flooding.) God has provided as everyone reached safely without incidents.

Before the start of the conference, there was mostly rain during the day, which meant the activities outside would not be able to take place,



but after a call to prayer the rain came during the night on the conference days. We were not affected by it and our activities outside could take place. What a miracle, happening so closely after our call to prayer.

To the left you see a picture of a participant from the Netherlands. He had a layover in Paris and lost his luggage there. Panic struck, as it is stressful to be stuck without your personal belongings. God put it in our hearts to pray for the arrival of the suitcase, and it happened. It is very special how God can be so close in situations like these. This as well was an answered prayer.

This also applied to our open-hearted taxi driver, who told us that he was stressed to gather the school fee of his child until the 1st of May, so his child could continue to attend. We prayed for it and the news came that the government kept the school closed because of the floods. This gave him more time and he later told us that God had provided and he had gathered the school fee in time. This was one of the events before the conference, when we didn't know yet what God was planning for us later on.

ICCM Africa conference

The BTL Christian International Conference Centre in Ruiru was the location for the ICCM Africa conference, which lasted from April 30 to March 3 this year. Ruiru is close to Nairobi, the capital of Kenya. The conference had 38 participants from countries like Kenya, DR Congo, Uganda and Nigeria.

After the introductions, we started with games to bring the participants more in contact with each other. This idea came from evaluations of previous conferences. This was a success as it immediately led to a more relaxed atmosphere. The keynote speaker was Rev. Peter G. Mathenge. He introduced us to the theme of the conference: Living in Creativity. He explained this in three sessions. These explored a creative life in a constantly changing world, through necessities, goals, functions and ways of life. Apart from that, there were eleven workshops related to this theme, including those about IT, spiritual themes, time management, life planning and leadership. During the conference we split into small groups to pray. This is an important part of the conference, which we call Prayer Pals. The grouping into twelve prayer groups, based on the twelve tribes from the Old Testament, and the topics were prepared by Sjoerd.

The next part of the programme was to exchange ideas about the organisation of the ICCM Africa conference. This went very well. We told about the history of ICCM Africa and our challenges, but also about what has to be done to organise the conference. We did this to encourage African participants to organise a conference like this by themselves. During this session, the idea came up to set up a local committee to organise the ICCM Africa conference and to work with local partners for sponsorship to cut the costs and expand the capacity. This committee was formed and received a blessing during the conference.

Technology for Mission

Technology for Mission is a contest where ideas for technological applications are presented. The group assesses whether they could have an impact on lives and on the mission field. The following four themes are being considered:

1. impact (what is the actual and potential effect for the Kingdom of God?)
2. quality (how is the technical quality and ease of use?)
3. cooperation (how well is cooperation utilised or stimulated?)
4. reusability (to what extent can other ministries use this idea?)

A selection of this year's presentations: Victor showed his Lutrixbox. Salomon from Congo shared his alarm system for hospital patients and Sikad uses videos to spread the gospel. Sikad has won this year's Technology for Mission Contest.

Birds of a Feather

During the conference, participants could suggest topics to discuss. These topics could then be voted on. Birds of a Feather, from "birds of a feather flock together", was a success this year. The topics with the most votes became part of the programme. This time, we had many new topics to fill our evenings.



Helping each other

During the conference there is, apart from discussions and relaxing, also time to help each other. Peter from DOOR International had problems with WiFi and the network in his office. As Peter is deaf, he was supported by two interpreters. As such Patrick and Ruben were able to talk to him and solve the problems which he had in his office. These are beautiful moments which we experience during the conference.

ICCM West Africa

For a while, we have been receiving registrations and scholarship requests, not only from East Africa but also from West Africa. This has brought us to contemplate starting a conference in West Africa. If it is only held in Kenya, in East Africa, it is not possible for everyone to come due to the high cost of flying, so this demand from West Africa became a theme at our conference. It was a very special experience to see God's plan and way this clearly.

The idea for ICCM West Africa came around January this year. We were looking for sponsors for Chris from Nigeria, so he could come to ICCM Africa to have the first meetings and discussions about this. We also wanted to teach Chris how to organise a conference like this. We have known Chris since 2014 and he also knows the concept of ICCM, so it seemed a good idea to make him chairman of ICCM Africa in West Africa. After a few calls, we quickly got funding for his plane ticket. We see this as an answered prayer as well. As he flew to Kenya, he met a pastor from Nigeria who was interested in ICCM Africa and happy to help set up the conference in West Africa.

Victor from Nigeria was present at the ICCM Africa conference as well. Next to his business, Victor has a foundation to do missionary work. We can use this to organise an ICCM Africa locally. Everything came together beautifully.



Folarin came to ICCM Africa for the first time, as a missionary in Nigeria who spreads the gospel in remote places. He had asked for a scholarship, but initially there was no funding for this. God wanted him to come after all, as a week before the conference we could award him a scholarship and he had found a local sponsor for his flight. On top of this, Folarin was also thinking about setting up ICCM in West Africa. Everything came together and we had the opportunity to give a blessing to the team during the conference, of which we took a photo.

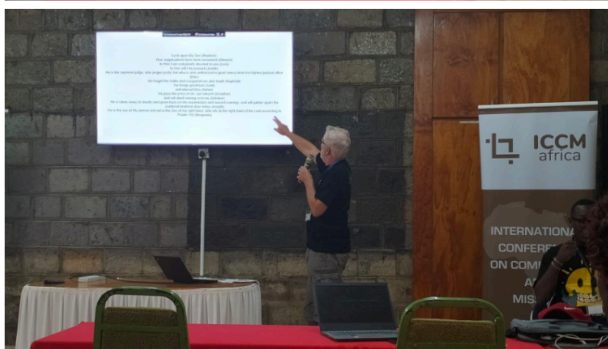


This team is very active. The first meeting has already taken place and the date of the conference has been fixed to August 25 to 29, 2025. We were very happy to see how God revealed His plan to us and opened doors.

One minute of silence

We held one minute of silence to remember former participants who passed away. We remembered Pastor Stephen from Uganda and Hillary Ambetsa from Kenya. Pastor Stephen already took part in ICCM Africa in 2015. He has even been keynote speaker twice. He went to be with the Lord in May 2023. Hillary we know from the ICCM Africa 2023 conference. He went to be with the Lord in September 2023. In memory of both of them, we spent a minute in silence and closed in prayer.

Looking back to the leadership training



A report of Sjoerd Kuipers. Simon Kerandi is a Kenyan who currently works for a Baptist organisation called Storyline. Together with him, I have set up multiple leadership programmes for pastors. This mostly concerns pastors involved in church planting in Kenya. I spoke to one of them about his work in the North of Kenya. He is ministering for seven churches, especially concerning UPGs (Unreached People Groups). In his

environment, he has a lot of contact with Muslim communities. Recently, ten people from these communities have been baptised based on their testimony that Jesus is the Son of God. These people live in a desert. Especially for them, a hole was dug in the desert and filled with water. Everyone in the village could see how they were literally buried and raised with Christ. I get energy from testimonies like these and I know God enjoys them.

It had rained a lot in Kenya when we did our leadership workshops. The streets were flooded. During this mission trip, our first meeting was in Utawala, a place north of Nairobi. Despite many pastors being unable to come due to floods after heavy rain, we decided to go ahead. Simon took the pastors along in a workshop about the necessity of mission and evangelisation. After that, it was up to me to hold a workshop about time management and life planning. Both topics are enjoying an increasing demand among African Christians. These workshops were also held during the ICCM conference and have triggered a lot in the participants. One of them said that if he had had this knowledge before, he would have made different choices in life. In the end it is Jesus Christ who paves the way to a next life stage!

It was initially intended to hold a second pastors' conference after ICCM in Thika. Because many of them were not able to reach Thika due to the rains and flooding, this meeting did not take place. We decided to hold an online meeting in Autumn. Because the demand for leadership training is large, we are considering starting a branch of KingdomIT for this. I would like to ask for prayer for wisdom here!

Finally

We have come to the end of this travel report. You have been able to read which encouraging things happen in KingdomIT. We experience that God uses us to build a bit of His Kingdom. But we can't do this alone. To continue, we would kindly request you to support us. Do you want to build with us? This is possible with a monthly donation.

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