

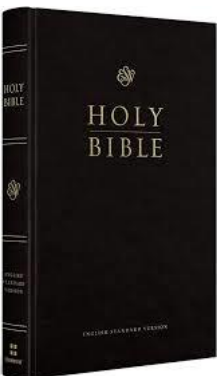
"Be still, and know that I am God." - Psalm 46:10

July 16, 2024



Dear ministry partners, this picture that Holly and I took on the island of Zanzibar a couple months ago beckons my soul to "renew," to draw near to the Lord, the focus of this update. **"Renew"** = "Give fresh life or strength to; revive; extend for a further period the validity of." Read on to learn how Holly and I plan to "renew" so we can extend our service for the Lord.

In John 15, Jesus charges His followers to "abide in Christ," the only command in verses 1-11. But it is so easy for us to focus on the other action word in the passage, "bearing fruit," the natural outward by-product of inward abiding. Fruit is visible, attractive, and sweet, and our "fruit bearing" (i.e. ministry service) easily eclipses our abiding in Christ, resting in Him and being renewed by Him.



The Bible commands we do this (Psalm 46:10) for in God alone we find soul rest (Ps. 23:1-3, 62:5). Jesus set an example numerous times (Mark 1:35, Matt. 14:13). In Matt. 4, as Jesus was about to begin His ministry, being led by the Spirit He spends 40 days out in the wilderness. In the midst of a growing ministry and crowds flocking to him, "Jesus Himself would often slip away to the wilderness and pray." (Luke 5:16) And Jesus instructed His followers to do likewise, "And he said to them, 'Come away by yourselves to a desolate place and rest a while.' For many were coming and going, and they had no leisure even to eat." (Mark 6:31)

Why haven't I followed Jesus' example? 11 years of post-graduate education; 12 years of full-time pastoral ministry; 17 years of full-time missionary service; and in all that time, I've never STOPPED! Even during Covid, when many in our mission were forced to take a break, I was cranking away on my doctorate from morning till night. I take short pauses here and there to spend time with God and family. But I have never taken an extended time to rest, reflect, rejoice, renew, re-align, and then re-engage as a refreshed servant of Christ. I know the truth: God is in control, and I am not. He is fully

capable of doing His amazing work without me. But my culture mixed with my sinful nature create a powerful current driving me onward in ministry with an inflated sense of my own significance. I think Africans “need” me and Pathways Bible Training. The reality is they need the Lord and His Word, and He can use me or Pathways or MANY others to do His glorious work.

So, in obedience to our Lord, and in collaboration with our mission, Holly and I will be engaging in a two-month “sabbatical” time our mission calls “RENEW.” ReachGlobal strongly encourages long-term missionaries to renew 2-4 months every five years, so we are finally getting around to it. Far different from a vacation, there are five structured stages to this period of disengagement from normal ministry and leadership responsibilities for the purpose of drawing near to God and evaluating our life and ministry. We will be reporting to coaches and a support team who will walk with us through our renew plan. During the first three weeks, we will be **recharging**: physically, emotionally, and spiritually. Then we will move into a focused time of **reflecting** on what needs adjustment in our lives and ministry. Finally, our time will end with **re-aligning**, implementing necessary changes, and **re-engaging** in ministry. Our time frame is mid August – mid October, and I’ll be eager to share with you what we learn after we finish. Holly and I recognize we both need this time “in the wilderness” for our health and longevity in mission service, so we are excited to follow the Lord’s lead through these uncharted waters. **Please pray** for us to “be still,” to wait upon Him, to listen to Him, and to learn from Him. Thank you for your prayers and support!

Looking Back

Following our whirlwind May, where we were only home for a few days, during the last six weeks **Holly** has been preparing for her prayer responsibilities at a division conference in Mexico in August. Meanwhile, I (**Eric**) was training two networks of pastors and church planters in Kenya, first in Nairobi, then in Mombasa during a turbulent political season. Amazing “God-sightings!” Catch pictures, testimonies, a video, and more details [HERE](#).



Looking Forward

- August 3-10 – Global Equipping conference and meetings in Mexico.
- Mid-August – Mid-October – RENEW. We will be offline so will catch up afterward.
- October 26-27 – Speak at a missions conference in southern WA.
- October 29-30 – Lead local Pathways training for pastors.
- Early November – Final training and graduation in Malawi.
- Early December – Launch two Pathways networks in Egypt.

Thank you so very much for your prayers, your vital partnership, and your passion to see the Great Commission fulfilled among every tongue, tribe, people, and nation. To that end, let us press on!

With love, *Eric and Holly*

"The Lord is my shepherd; I shall not want. He makes me lie down in green pastures. He leads me beside still waters. He restores my soul. He leads me in paths of righteousness for his name's sake." -Psalm 23:1-3